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THE SMART SET

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HALF A HUNDRED BURLESQUES, EPIGRAMS, POEMS, SHORT SATIRES, ETC.

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THE SMART SET

The Magazine That The Other Magazine Editors Read.

THE WOMAN WHO WAS HOMELY

By Hale Merriman

ONCE there was a woman who was homely. She had a bad complexion, plentifully adorned with pimples, and a turned-up nose all covered with freckles. She had scanty hair and hardly any eyebrows or lashes, and her ears stood straight out from her head. Her eyes were red rimmed and turned up at the outer corners.

One day she read an article in a woman's magazine and resolved to become beautiful. She loved greasy foods and rich pastry and candy . . . and pickles . . . but she turned her back squarely upon them. She ate oranges . . . fruit of all kinds but bananas . . . drank lemon juice for the sake of her liver. Some one told her that carrots were good for the complexion. She ate carrots. And raw onions . . . she loathed them . . . but she ate them.

She bathed her face in buttermilk and lemon juice to remove the freckles and bought a bottle of blood purifier . . . and an arrangement for strapping the ears to the head, which she wore

under her night cap. Upon her nose she put a clothespin.

Every morning she bathed in cold water . . . and rubbed her skin until it glowed redly . . . and practised deep breathing before an open window. She brushed her hair by the hour and massaged the scalp with her fingers. She bought three kinds of hair tonic and a preparation to use on her eyebrows after she brushed them. She massaged the corners of her eyes to bring them down and grew friendly with an eye cup. She bought creams and powders and lotions.

Every morning she took exercises before an open window to make her body beautiful. She twisted, she turned, she contorted. She learned to swim and to play tennis. She walked five miles each day and slept on a sleeping-porch almost in the altogether.

One day after about a year of this treatment she looked in the mirror. And—lo and behold—!

She was homelier than ever!



FROM THE UNPUBLISHED MEMOIRS OF A FOUR-YEAR-OLD

By H. S. Haskins

THURSDAY.—The sun woke me up at 5 o'clock. In the bed next to me my father slept on his back and snored. I thought he would snore for some time, so for lack of something else to do I took off my pajamas and dropped them over the edge of the crib. I liked being naked, fine. Horrors! Father woke up.

You'd think his eyes would be sleepy, but they weren't. You wouldn't think they'd be mad, but they were. Father reached over and grabbed me. He put on my little bathrobe which hung at the end of his bed. I knew what was coming. I hoped the bathrobe would protect me. It did—where I didn't need it. Father lifted it away from the place which required it most and spanked me. That was Event No. 1.

Everything went well until afternoon. Then I threw a handful of pebbles into my sister's face. How should I know that there was a sharp stone among them? I am sure that I was sorry as anybody to see the scratch on sister's cheek. All nurse said was: "I'll tell your father about this when he comes home to-night." I knew what *that* meant.

I tried my level best to be good after that. Sister kissed me and forgave me and took me out to see the rabbits. They have such fluffy tails! I took hold of a bunny's tail through the chicken-wire. At that moment Bunny

jumped. I couldn't help that. The fluff came off in my hand.

I wonder what time Father is coming home!

Things might be different if I had a mother.

When I grow up I shall never spank little bits of children. It would be fairer, it seems to me, for children to spank grown-up people. Grown-up people are strong and big and wouldn't mind it. Little children aren't strong and do mind it.

I wonder what time Father is coming home, tonight . . . I made believe sleep, just now. He tiptoed into the room and bent over my crib. A man came in, behind him.

"Look at the little tyke," Father said. "He's a terror, that little cuss is. Takes off his pajamas at night, pulls rabbits' tails in the daytime—the place won't hold him."

"I guess you're not proud of him, Jim," said the man.

"Oh, no!" whispered Father.

He stooped and kissed me.

"I've got to spank the little devil in the morning," said my Father as he left the room with the other man.

He's going to spank me in the morning.

What kind of love is that?

If I had a Mother I know things would be different.



THE BELL IN THE LIBRARY

By Isabel McDougall

AFTER that first Monday evening at Firtees, John Maxwell wished he had not agreed to spend a week of his vacation with the Suydams. He did not care for the Long Island set, though he had always liked Derrick Suydam—every one did. Mrs. Suydam he knew but slightly and liked less. She was a horsewoman of renown, a leading spirit at Piping Rock. Her robust type of beauty, her domineering manner, even her deep contralto voice, contrasted disagreeably, in his opinion, with his old friend's debonnaire blondness and pleasant drawl. She was the moneyed one, Maxwell recollected, and it seemed to him that she was not inclined to forget it.

"My" tapestries, she called the Gobelin hangings in the stately entrance hall; and when Maxwell admired the carving of the monumental stair that swept upward in wide, graceful curves, she shrugged her shoulders and said: "Derrick prefers the elevator. I had the entire staircase brought from the chateau de lagny on the Marne. My architect has done well with it, I think."

Most wives would have said "our" tapestries, "our" architect. Maxwell believed that Emily Suydam, too, would have done so at the time of his first visit to them. But that was years before she inherited the Anderson fortune, or built Firtees. The present lavish style of living there exceeded even what he had been led to expect.

"On Wednesday," Derrick Suydam had told his guest, as they motored from the distant station, "there's a crowd coming out for the Van Zandt's St. Patrick dance. Till then we are only eight—four couples for dancing or two

tables for auction." And to Maxwell's inquiry he enumerated lightly: "Jack Howard and his wife—you must have met him; stout; good sort; too lazy for anything but cards and the Union Club window. Mrs. Howard was a classmate of Emily's at Bryn Mawr. Great talker; very active; goes in for every fad; fox-trot, cubism, Belgian relief, anti-suffrage, Billy Sunday—"

"I know the type," laughed Maxwell, "if not the individual. Who else?"

"Mrs. Roner—"

"The Mrs. Roner? The beauty?"

Suydam had stretched his long legs out and smiled amiably. "The only Mrs. Roner I know. And see, here come the kids, our other two. Stop for them, Durand."

They had turned into the entrance avenue of tall locusts that people compare with Hobbema's "Road at Middelharnis," and down it were sauntering two young people, dark and slender and graceful as the trees.

"Maxwell, you must have met our young cousins, Philippa and Harry Anderson."

Quicker than the man on the box Maxwell had jumped out and taken off his hat, showing his white teeth in a frank smile that lighted up his rather plain face.

"Not since we used to call them 'the two little black kittens,' seven years ago," he said, as he helped the girl into the car.

Perhaps the allusion to kittenhood offered her youthful dignity, for she gave no answering smile until Suydam added in his genial way, "John Maxwell is one of my best friends, Philippa, for all his visits are seven years apart.

And, Harry," nudging the lad, "he is also one of the best editors in the country."

Harry Anderson, it appeared, was ambitious of a literary career and eager to know an editor. He was a swarthy, plain, unhealthy replica of his pretty twin sister. Both had greatly changed from the two lively, black-haired children of Maxwell's remembrance. Philippa still had the "kitten face," framed in masses of soft dark hair—a vivacious triangular face, broad across the clear yellow-brown eyes and narrowing quaintly down to the demurely roguish mouth and adorable little chin.

Later, dinner dragged. Mrs. Suydam, clad in glittering jet, hard and clinging as scale armor, barely spoke save to address Derrick in a curt, belligerent manner which he accepted with unimpaired suavity. Maxwell had been told she was "a creature of moods," that frequent euphism for an uncontrolled temper. Gaynor, the butler, and his assistants moved about the shining table with a silent alacrity which he imputed to a wholesome dread of their mistress. The Howards showed themselves to be of the usual chattering kind that fills in all chinks and forms part of the furniture of every house party. Mrs. Roner turned out to be a beauty of the frail and languid type. The seduction of her transparent evening gown, her elaborately waved flaxen hair, the artificial emphasizing of blood-red lips and black-fringed eyes, so telling in the white oval of her face, bespoke a skilful maid.

She devoted herself closely to Maxwell, who was her neighbor. She gave him to understand that the essentials of masculine good looks were a large frame and auburn hair—auburn was her kindly word! Also he was forced to deny the flattering assumption that of course he sang, with such a musical speaking voice. It was to laugh. He could not gain even a few words with his hostess on his left, nor with Philippa opposite. And he was aware that both noticed and condemned the apparent

flirtation. Mrs. Suydam's gloomy, black eyes turned upon his prattling neighbor with an unconcealed aversion that made him exclaim inwardly, "What a devil's own temper!"

Philippa laughed a good deal as she replied to Howard's heavy attacks on woman suffrage—attacks made with antiquated pointless weapons that were no match for her light artillery. Maxwell liked the quick turns of her small well-brushed head; he liked the way she dressed; the wide brocade bow gave her something of a Japanese air. He was distinctly not enjoying himself. The determined coquette on his left should have been paired off with some such adored and adorer of women as good old Derrick.

After dinner the Howards clamored for auction, and Mrs. Suydam commandeered Harry as her partner against them. Thereupon Suydam, like a docile husband, followed his wife's example, seizing on the reluctant Philippa to play with him against Maxwell and Mrs. Roner.

"Are you of those noble souls who are greatest in defeat?" inquired that lady with an exaggeratedly plaintive appeal in her large blue eyes, "for I am a poor player."

Maxwell duly declared his delight at going down to defeat in her company, without dreaming how poor a player she could be. She shuffled and dealt with an exquisite display of white jewelled hands, but her mind—if she had a mind—was not on what she was doing; her attention wandered constantly to the other table; often he had to remind her that it was her turn. To make amends, when it was his turn she talked to him with a nervous flow of chatter.

After they had lost three rubbers she abruptly declared a headache—one of her headaches. Dear Mrs. Suydam always understood and excused her if she slipped out quietly. They would just settle up and then shake hands all round.

"Good night, Philippa, hail to the victor! Good night, Mr. Maxwell,

comrade in disaster!" She gave each a light clasp.

Maxwell responded with something trite about her doubtless compensating luck in love, whereat Philippa threw him a glance of unreasonable anger and turned her slim back. His harmless remarks seemed to have a knack of angering Philippa. Mrs. Roner smiled with vague amiability, playing absently with the lace that barely veiled her bosom. "Good night, mine host!" to Derrick, and she was gone in a moment.

But in that moment a bit of paper passed from her hand to Suydam's. Maxwell moved quickly away with a gentleman's instinct of not seeing what he was not meant to see. No one else had seen, he felt sure; the Howards were engaging their hostess's attention, and Philippa was whispering behind her fan to her brother. Maxwell guessed that she was offering him her winnings, for Harry had lost at his table, and had been soundly berated for it by Mrs. Suydam. Maxwell heard him mutter: "It's no use, Phil. Cousin Emily has it in for me anyhow." And in truth presently Mrs. Suydam beckoned the sulky youth into the conservatory, whence their quarreling voices were distinctly audible.

Suydam started an animated conversation with the Howards, his mellow laugh drawing their responsive chuckles. Philippa busied herself in putting away the cards. She drooped dispiritedly over the silk-covered tables and did not look up when Maxwell came to her assistance. Tears glittered on her downcast lashes.

"We are all a bit tired to-night," he observed, as he folded the tables. "The air is so heavy it gets on our nerves. There is a storm brewing. You ought to follow Mrs. Roner's example."

Philippa gave him a startled glance and drew herself up. "Allow me to select my own models," she said tartly.

"I mean in going to bed early," he hurried to add. (*Could she have seen?*) "We all need it. For my part I am a wreck. A business man's holiday always means crowding a month's work

into the previous week, you know. Then Derrick tells me he is going to the city to-morrow and must make an early start."

"Yes," she assented coldly, ignoring his remarks about himself, "I believe Cousin Rick has some directors' meeting to attend. He'll stay at his club all night. He won't be back till Wednesday evening, in time for the Van Zandt's dance."

Her anxious gaze turned toward the palm-shaded doorway and actually seemed drawing the rest of her person after it, when Suydam sauntered to them.

"Poor Harry is getting bawled out," he observed with cheerful frankness. "He deserves it, you know, but perhaps it has lasted long enough." Giving them the warmth of his sunny smile he passed on into the green dimness.

"Rick to the rescue," commented Maxwell. He desired at once to comfort and to make light of the episode. Of course one should not comment on family dissensions, yet after all it was impossible to ignore this one and he had known the brother and sister when they were but "a pair of little black kittens."

Then he wished he had held his peace, for Philippa's quick temper roused at once. For the second time she offered him an entirely charming rear view of a glossy black head surmounting a long lovely triangle of bare neck, and walked deliberately across the room to the Howards. With a wry smile Maxwell watched her filmy yellow draperies float away. Then he noticed them uncover and leave behind, like jetsam after a retreating wave, a scrap of something white. Mechanically he stooped from where he leaned against the door frame and picked it up. It was a scrap of paper bearing three words in pencil, which he took in at a glance:

Tuesday at seven. H.

As he held it Mrs. Suydam suddenly brushed past him, reëntering from the conservatory. Her eyes flamed into his and devoured the paper.

"Give it to me," she spoke abruptly.

It is a promise from my graceless ward, but I put little faith in him."

Her voice was harsher than usual, her eyes glittered, her color was high. Behind her emerged Harry, swaggering defiantly, followed by Suydam, tall and with unusual gravity on his handsome face. Something in the imperious woman's demeanor made both men appear tame.

It was something Maxwell felt but could not name, though he tried to later; something fierce and lawless . . . despair . . . a covert ferocity . . . a hint of savagery. . . . What words to apply to his friend's wife and his hostess! He wished he had not come to Firtees—queer name Rick gave that big place of his!

As he got himself to sleep Maxwell shook his head. That scrawl signed "H" might be Harry's, might be a promise to pay, or an appointment, but—

Queer place, Firtees! Queer people! There was a feeling of tensi, of something going on under the surface, of a storm brewing, as he had told that pretty vixen. His thoughts turned pityingly to her, for all she was a vixen, for all she had been unwarrantably rude to him. Had not her eyes been wet and her mouth quivering even as she snubbed him, poor child? He wanted to get her away from her cub of a brother, from Hortense Roner's amorous intrigues, from her frivolous guardian, from his passionate wife. Yes, above all from Emily Suydam. There was a dangerous woman!

II

TUESDAY was worse than Monday. The plan had been motoring over to watch a practise game of the polo team, but a heavy rain rendered playing impossible. Howard was cross about it. "Well, you *wouldn't* go to Florida," his wife reminded him. Derrick was absent; Mrs. Suydam only showed herself to her guests at luncheon; Philippa remained antagonistic, the provoking little creature!

Philippa's eyes slanted the least bit

upward; Maxwell found this piquant. The whites had a slight bluish tinge; he discovered that this made them clearer and more brilliant. Philippa's mouth was her best feature, the red lips prettily rounded and opening with a sort of special neatness over white even teeth. But the lips would not smile nor the eyes light for him, though she was all animation with dull Jack Howard, all sweetness with her lout of a brother. John Maxwell was not used to such treatment. He had always got on with girls. Without undue conceit he knew himself to be a sufficiently likable chap. Why was it that this girl disliked him, this mere child? Had he presumed on his acquaintance with her childhood? Was it his friendship for Derrick she resented? Or his beginning flirtation with Mrs. Roner?

That ceased perforce, for Mrs. Roner still kept to her room with one of her headaches. He was thrown either upon Mrs. Howard, interminably knitting for the Belgians, prattling the while about dear Emily at Bryn Mawr as if they had but just been graduated, or else upon Harry Anderson, who wanted "the editor" to read his poems and pity his artistic temperament in conflict with Cousin Emily's meanness. Distant laughter from the squash court revealed how Howard and Philippa were killing time; but they had not asked him to join. If this was vacation, give him work!

In the afternoon things went better. They had all thawed out and shaken down a bit, as Harry put it, by the time Philippa gave them tea in the living-room. She dismissed the butler, and Maxwell, who did not like tea, liked the informality of taking tiny Spode cups from her hand, liked having her urge hot cakes upon him; she had to relax her hostility then.

Harry soon took himself and his complaints and his ambitions off, but the four who were left discovered unexpected points in common, as often happens. They lounged between the open fire and the streaming windows, cosily chatting until twilight fell and Mrs.

Howard hurried them all off to dress for dinner. It would never do for Philippa to be late, she said, with heavy playfulness; she might spoil her record of always being down stairs fifteen minutes ahead of time.

John Maxwell brushed his red head and got into his evening clothes with alacrity. He was acting upon information received: Philippa should not spend that quarter of an hour alone. At the strategic moment he was starting leisurely down stairs, when he was brought to a run by a woman's shriek. He took the rest of the steps in a jump.

Once more the cry came, "Help! They're killed! They're killed!"

Following it around a sharp turn to the left and down a long passage he rushed into one of the maids open-mouthed at the library door.

"Hush, Annie!" he ordered severely, knowing something of the uncontrolled sensationalism of her class. "Stop this noise at once!"

Annie hushed obediently, but clutched him, pointing.

In the spacious book-lined room Hortense Roner reclined in a capacious chair by the fire; she was utterly relaxed, her arms thrown nervelessly over its sides, her head sunk on her breast so that her face was in deep shadow; yet even so its deadly pallor was apparent. Prone on the floor lay Emily Suydam. Her left hand was pressed against her bosom where the lace was drenched in blood. Her face was fixed in a frown of pain or effort, her teeth showed between her pale lips in something like a grin. She was dead, quite dead, the young man found, as he stooped horrified over her, stabbed to the heart. Mrs. Roner still breathed.

A hundred questions, impulses, dreads, jostled through his mind in the few seconds that he moved from one inanimate form to the other. Perhaps because Philippa had been his last dominant thought, the first that now occurred to him was that of sparing her a shock.

"Keep quiet, and don't frighten the ladies," he warned the maid, cowering

at the door and ran back to the stairs just in time to meet the descending group.

"Go back, Philippa! Don't come, Mrs. Howard!" His tone was so commanding that they stopped. "Both of you please hurry ahead to Mrs. Roner's room and get it ready for her. She has been taken very ill. No, don't come. We mustn't crowd her. She needs air. She has fainted. Howard, come help me carry her upstairs; she is unconscious. Harry, go phone for a doctor. Ladies, I count on you to take care of her until he comes."

There is something in human nature that yields obedience to a determined assumption of authority. Philippa and Mrs. Howard meekly reascended to prepare the sickroom. With a jerk of his head Maxwell drew Howard after him to the library.

"Wha-wha-what's happened?" stammered the stout clubman, recoiling from the sight that met his eyes.

"Oh, my God!" came a shriller exclamation. Perhaps the masculine mind is less susceptible than the feminine mind to an assumption of authority, for there was Harry Anderson's blanched face peering over Howard's shoulder.

"Both murdered! both dead!" he gasped.

"No, but they will be if you don't get that doctor here soon," Maxwell told him.

But Harry was incapable of action. He clung to the door frame; his eyes zigzagged wildly from his prostrate cousin to her pale guest and settled in a fascinated stare between them. The firelight gilded Hortense Roner's fair hair and blazed in a ruby ring on one white drooping hand. Just below the hand something else gleamed metallically on the hearth rug. Emily Suydam lay with her right arm pointed stiffly in the direction of the other woman, the fist tightly clenched, as if threatening even in death. Between these two hands, equi-distant from each, an antique bronze dagger caught the light. This it was that riveted Harry's gaze.

"Oh Lord! oh Lord! oh Lord! oh!"
 "Pull yourself together, boy, and get that doctor, I tell you." Maxwell repeated impatiently.

"I c-can't!" Harry's teeth were chattering so that he could hardly speak.

"Do the 'phoning yourself," Howard suggested. "Margaret, here, will help me."

"Oh, no, sir! Not I." The maid retreated from the threshold, wrapping her arms in her apron. "I never could abide the sight of blood. Let me call Joseph."

In the end it was the second butler who assisted in carrying Mrs. Roner to her room. Meanwhile Maxwell, discovering a telephone desk in one of the many recesses of the library, summoned Dr. R. Lee Carson, the first physician whose name he found.

It was a satisfaction to him that he could do this without deserting his dead hostess, lying where she had fallen, stately as an overthrown statue, her loose yellow gown and her superb dark hair spread carelessly over the deeper blacks and tans of the tiger rug. Maxwell was reminded of Mrs. Roner's planned harmonies in dress and background. And the bitter smile on Emily Suydam's stiff lips seemed to mock his thought.

He called the police next, in spite of Harry's broken murmur. "Oh, not the police! . . . Not the police in their own house . . . Cousin Rick's and Cousin Emily's. . . ."

"Have you any idea where Rick was going to-night?" Maxwell interrupted.

No; Harry apparently had no ideas on any subject. Maxwell might as well turn to the sneering dead woman on the floor as to her live nephew, shivering in his corner.

"His clubs," mused Maxwell, turning the leaves of the telephone directory with a scowl of concentration. "Give me Plaza 980. . . . Hello! University Club? Is Mr. Suydam there? . . . Hasn't been there to-day? Listen, then. Take this message for him in case he comes in. It is important. Be sure he gets it. This is Mr. Suydam's resi-

dence. A serious accident has occurred; he is needed home at once. . . . Repeat it. . . . That's right. Thank you. Good-bye. . . . Let's see, what's the number of the Racquet Club? Though I don't know why Rick would be there." He wasn't there. Nor was he at several other clubs. "Yet I must get him," muttered Maxwell. "Harry couldn't you give me the names of some of his fellow directors?"

Harry shook his head weakly.

"I've a notion," muttered Maxwell, "that Norman Carruthers is president of the C. J. & Q. . . ."

Mr. Carruthers had seen Mr. Suydam at a directors' meeting but didn't know where he might be found now; possibly Carleton S. Conway, a brother director, might know. Mr. Conway, with difficulty torn from his dinner, had invited Suydam to come home with him, but had been refused under plea of a previous engagement. No, he did not know where Suydam meant to stay that night; at the Waldorf, perhaps, or maybe at Tom Nelson's apartment.

Perseveringly, but vainly, Maxwell called up Rick's intimates, his favorite restaurants, his clubs. At each place he could but leave a peremptory summons home. And every time he failed to find the husband he turned to meet the wife's derisive grin. Presently Gaynor announced Dr. Carson, and with a sigh Maxwell hung up the 'phone.

"He had better see Mrs. Roner first. I'll go up with him. Harry, you stay here."

"Oh no! Oh no!" yammered Harry following. "Well, if I must, Howard shall stay with me," clutching that solid citizen's arm.

Dr. Carson was a sallow, serious man, bearded in the Van Dyck style that has become a mark of the physician or the artist. Mrs. Howard ran out of Mrs. Roner's room and met the two men at the top of the stairs. Excited and more voluble than ever, she detained them for a while, informing the physician of facts which Maxwell had already imparted and answering his few

questions at great length. She said Mrs. Roner had roused from her swoon but had not fully recovered her senses. She was what you might call delirious, irrational—kept muttering things without connection. It was almost a pity a doctor had been called; Mrs. Howard felt sure that she and Philippa could do everything that was necessary. And wasn't it unwise to alarm Mrs. Roner with a stranger's appearance. She was much calmer; she would go to sleep if left undisturbed; she was perfectly quiet now. . . .

Even as she talked a choking cry came from the door behind her.

"Pardon me, madam." Dr. Carson pushed past her.

III

MEANTIME the police were very busy "in their own house—Cousin Rick's, Cousin Emily's!" Busy measuring, pacing, prying in the spacious library, where the fire had gone out and the marble-floored room, gloomy at the best of times, with its book-lined walls and its heavy leathern furniture, had now the chill of death. Busy scrutinizing the empty shell of Emily Suydam's tormented spirit; busy speculating on the appalling expression frozen to her still lips; busy studying the wound that crimsoned yet barely disarranged her luxurious negligée; busy, very busy, calling one another's attention to the absence of any jewelry; a suggestive point, surely.

In a police officer almost as much as in a soldier one looks for trimness, alertness, decision, and something of a military bearing. There was none of this about Inspector Rogers. He was a hulking, gray-haired countryman, with a heavy jowl and placable ox-like brown eyes. Yet his examination, carried on in a slovenly rural drawl, was intelligent and minute.

"Git in here, all of you. Plenty o' room in here," he observed at the threshold of the Renaissance music-room. He waved in guests and servants with his G. A. R. hat as if he were shoeing cattle. "Now then," depositing

his bulk in the emblazoned fauteuil of an Italian cardinal and placing a shabby black note-book in front of him on a carved cinquecento table. "Who's the one that found them first? You?" To the maid who was shoved forward. "Your name is Annie Ryan. You're the chambermaid, ain't you?"

"No, sir, I'm the parlormaid."

"Oh, vurry well, parlormaid, then. Now, Annie Ryan, tell us in your own way just what happened."

"Nothing happened, sir, till about a quarter past seven. Then the bell in the library rang, and I answered it, and when I opened the door—"

"One minute. What makes you so sure of the time?"

"Because Margaret was just after looking at the clock, and she says to me, 'It's a quarter past,' says she, 'and Mrs. Suydam'll never be dressed in time for dinner.' We have dinner at half-past seven, sir."

"Was Margaret Mrs. Suydam's maid?"

"No, sir. Matilda Cotman is Mrs. Suydam's maid, but Matilda had a jumping toothache, so Margaret was helping out. Margaret is an upstairs girl, sir."

"Go on. The library bell rang and you went there. You opened the door. What did you see?"

"The first thing I saw was Mrs. Roner, all in a heap-like in the great chair near the fire, an' I took notice how white she was, an' sort o'—sort o'—Well, I thought she maybe felt ill and rung for help and then fell in a swoon. An' I said, 'Did you ring, ma'am?' An' she didn't move nor answer. Then I stepped nearer. I was standing at the door an' the library table was between us. An' when I went round the table—Oh! then I saw Mrs. Suydam laying on the floor dead!"

"You didn't think she was in a swoon?"

"Oh, no sir. I knew she was gone the minute I looked at her. . . . Oh, sir! The way she lay, an' the blood, an' the dreadful face of her. Oh! oh!" Annie wiped her eyes upon her apron.

"Now, now. Try to stop crying. What did you do?"

"I ran out and screamed as hard as I could. An' then everybody came an'—

"Who came first?"

"Mr. Maxwell, that's visiting us. An' he said not to frighten the ladies. Everyone was running to the library. An' by and by he sent me downstairs to fetch Joseph."

"I see." Rogers made a note on his pad. "Well. Go on. After you fetched Joseph, what happened next?"

"I don't know, sir. I didn't go back with him. I was too frightened. Besides, cook and Margaret and all wanted me to tell them. So I don't know any more that went on in the library."

"Humph! You staid downstairs. One minute. You said that you opened the library door; it was closed, then. Do you happen to remember whether the library windows were closed?"

"I think they were, sir," thoughtfully. "I'd have noticed if they had been open, because you see, sir, they hadn't ought to be open on a cold, rainy night."

"You haven't mentioned that large bronze knife. Didn't you see it?"

"Sure, I seen it, there between the two poor souls, the very same big old paper-cutter that does be laying on the library table ever since I been here. Didn't I dust it myself this very morning? But it had fell off the table and got all over blood."

"That'll do. Now I'll hear the other girl."

Margaret, the chambermaid, corroborated the parlor maid's testimony in regard to time. She told how she was to "hook up" Mrs. Suydam on account of Matilda Cotman's toothache. Mrs. Suydam usually rang for her maid at half-past six; when it got to be seven, Margaret had knocked at Mrs. Suydam's door but no one answered, and she had gone away again. At a quarter past seven she had observed to Annie that her lady was going to be late to dinner. Then the library bell rang and Annie answered it.

"Immediately?" inquired Rogers,

looking up at her under his bushy gray eyebrows.

"Why—why—"

"Did she answer it immediately? Did she go to the library the minute she heard that bell?"

"Well, yes. That is, almost. We had a bit of an argument."

"Yes? What did you quarrel about?"

"'T wasn't what you could call a quarrel, sir; only just a few words. Annie Ryan thought she was being put upon because she was a new girl. Annie said as how 'twas my job to answer the library bell when Mr. Gaynor and Joseph was busy, and, sure, 'twas no such a thing. So I told her not on her life and beat it down to the kitchen, shutting both doors after me. What, sir? Yes, there's two doors to keep the smell of the cooking from upstairs. When they was both shut you couldn't hear a thing, so that was why we never knew nothing in the servants' hall till Annie Ryan rushed in, calling Joseph."

Then Maxwell, Howard and young Anderson gave their separate versions of practically the same story. They agreed on fixing the time of the alarm as not later than twenty minutes past seven; they had all seen the bloody dagger on the floor between the two victims; they had all noticed the set, frowning grimace on Mrs. Suydam's face. Harry had another shuddering fit when he spoke of it. A chance question brought out the fact that Harry had been in the library as late as half-past five.

"Please tell us about that in your own words, Mr. Anderson." The inspector seemed to have but one formula for eliciting information.

"Why," began Harry, "I just chanced to glance into the library on my way to tea in the living-room—"

"Is it on the way to the living-room?" asked Rogers innocently.

"Well, not exactly." Harry flushed. Everyone present knew that the living-room lay to the right at the foot of the stairs, while the library was around a sharp turn to the left, at the end of a long passage that led out of the central

hall. "Not exactly; that was merely a— a manner of speaking. I should have said that I turned into the library for a minute before joining the usual tea-fight. Anyhow, when I went in, Mrs. Roner roused herself from the deep armchair near the hearth."

"Was she asleep?"

"I don't think so. She had a book on her lap, and in her hand the bronze dagger that always lay on the library table."

"What was she doing with it?" The inspector's simplicity was infantile.

"Cutting the leaves, I suppose," said Harry pettishly, "that's what it is for."

"Go on. Did you stay long?"

"Not more than five minutes. She didn't want me. I said a word or two about her book, 'Percy's Reliques of Ancient English Poesy.' It is rather a favorite of mine."

Rogers whispered to one of his men.

"I even began reading an old ballad to her, but I saw it made her nervous. I asked her to join us in a cup of tea. She just shook her head and leaned back and closed her eyes. I was a bit sore. It looked as if she wanted to get rid of me, so I left."

"Is this the book?" asked Rogers, offering Harry one that had just been brought him.

"That's it, all right."

"Well, she couldn't have needed a paper-knife for this; the leaves are machine-trimmed," remarked the inspector.

Harry twisted his shoulders.

"I can only tell you what I saw," he said sulkily. "She may have been reading some dull English review before I came in. There are a lot of those in the library with uncut leaves."

"True," assented Rogers carelessly. "Did you happen to see whether the windows were open?"

Harry thought they were closed. He was sure he shut the door after him.

"Mr. Maxwell, you were the first to enter the library after the—the sad event. Did you notice the windows?"

"I noticed them particularly," answered Maxwell, "as possible means of

entrance and exit. The two short ones on the side were down and fastened; the long one on the terrace was closed but not locked. That one is a French window—a long window opening like a door. It was pushed to, but not hasped."

"Thank you. Now, then, Dr. Carson. Is Dr. Carson not here?"

"I've went for him twice," answered a constable, "but he said he could not leave the lady that was hurt. He'll be down as soon as he can. Ah! here he is."

Dr. Carson, slow and pompous, announced that though his examination was necessarily hasty and—ah—incomplete, he had no hesitation in declaring that Mrs. Suydam's death was due to a stab which penetrated the heart. He—ah—naturally conjectured it had been dealt with the bronze dagger, which fitted the wound and bore tell-tale stains. According to his—ah—poor judgment, life had been extinct for about two hours, rather more than less, when he first examined the body.

"As long as that? Are you sure?" asked Rogers, surprised.

Everyone looked startled. Maxwell felt that, like himself, each had assumed to discover, to have followed close upon the crime. It seemed hardly possible that a dead and an injured woman could have lain long unnoticed in a house full of people.

"Sir, I can but give you my best opinion," Dr. Carson, drawing himself up stiffly, resented the question as a slur. "I beg that you consult some other professional man. Yet I have little doubt but that he will agree with me."

The blow, he said, had been a savage one; it indicated a man of great strength; death must have been instantaneous. The same muscular hand, or one equally powerful, had choked his patient, Mrs. Roner, into insensibility; her throat was badly bruised. No, gentlemen, his patient was not in danger; probably in a few days she might safely answer their interrogations, but for the present he must insist that she be not

disturbed. When roused from her long swoon she had become hysterical and he had placed her under opiates. His patient was of extremely nervous temperament and had received a cruel shock. She might even have seen the murderer, from what the ladies told him.

At this John Maxwell barely restrained his tongue from evil speaking. That yellow-bearded chatterer! Why drag those two poor women deeper into this ghastly affair than necessary! Now, of course, they would be called.

They came in, clinging together, still in their tumbled dinner finery, Mrs. Jack Howard's society smile for once banished, Philippa's star-eyes quenched. All Maxwell could do was to place chairs for them and set his stalwart person so as to shield them somewhat from stares.

Philippa made her statement in almost inaudible tones. Questioned closely as to time, it was not, she said, half-past seven when she heard the alarm. She was positive because after dressing for dinner she had noticed that it still lacked ten minutes of the time. So she—so she had decided not to go down just yet.

Only Maxwell caught the brief hesitation and felt a hurt consciousness that Philippa must have guessed he would be there.

At Rogers' urging she went on with her tale: How she had heard the maid screaming and had rushed downstairs. How Mr. Maxwell had sent her and Mrs. Howard back, saying that Mrs. Roner was ill. How they had returned upstairs still ignorant of the tragedy in the library; indeed they had only just—just—been told—Philippa bowed her head and wept.

"There, there, take your time, Miss Anderson," said Rogers kindly.

Presently she faltered on, assisted by his questions. Yes, Mrs. Roner had partly recovered consciousness before the doctor came. Yes, she had muttered . . . several times. . . . Incoherent things. Mrs. Roner wasn't in her right senses.

Pressed for a closer account, Miss Anderson hesitated before stating that Mrs. Roner had screamed, "Oh, no! oh, no!" over and over again. Then, "Save me!" Then, "Oh, how could you! how could you!" . . .

"Oh!" cried poor Philippa, breaking down, "I—I—can't tell any more."

Mrs. Howard, who had sat holding the girl's hand, declared she could add nothing. She and Miss Anderson had been together sent away, ignorant, from the scene of the tragedy; would have known nothing of it yet if Dr. Carson had not told them. Together they had seen Mrs. Roner carried into her room; together had tended her until the physician arrived; together had heard her broken exclamations.

"Just one question, Mrs. Howard," said Rogers. "Mrs. Roner had no jewelry on, had she?"

"Yes. She wore several diamond rings and a handsome neck ornament."

"Humph!" He was disconcerted. He had built up a theory on the fact that no jewelry was found on Mrs. Suydam's body. Yet if she had been robbed, why not Mrs. Roner?

On being sent for, the dead woman's maid, Matilda Cotman, explained that unlike most wealthy ladies, her mistress's custom was to wear only her wedding ring. She could not speak for this occasion, for, most unfortunately she was suffering with an ulcerated molar, and Mrs. Suydam had kindly excused her from attendance that day.

Matilda Cotman was a highly respectable-looking, faded elderly woman, careful of dress and of language. She had a mincing manner of attempted elegance, for all her swollen face. Maxwell could have liked her better if she had called her ulcerated molar a jumping toothache.

Of course she knew Mrs. Suydam's custom. She had lived with her ten years. First as nurse to her child, the dear boy that died; then as nurse for Miss Philippa and Mr. Harry; and eventually as lady's maid to the best mistress that ever was.

"So all we have to go on," said Rog-

ers, on leaving, to the men of the house," is the dagger, the open window, the strong hand and the time—probably half an hour after you were in the library, Mr. Anderson."

Harry winced.

IV

EVERY now and then the limousine skidded on the muddy road. And Maxwell's mind also slipped from one side to another of the sombre path it was travelling. He was on his way to the station to break the news of Emily Suydam's death to her husband. The task had fallen on him as a closer friend than Howard, Harry Anderson, closer still, having flatly declined it.

"*Me go to meet Cousin Rick! I couldn't do it,*" he protested vehemently, while the motor which was to fetch Mr. Suydam clucked at the front door. "*No, I couldn't. I simply couldn't!*" with a womanish obstinacy that neither gave nor listened to reason, but sheltered itself behind hysterical repetition. So, after a discussion that merely wasted time, Maxwell had reluctantly gone.

The road was lonely. At long intervals straggling rays pierced the misty evening from some spacious country-house, lighted up as if for a festivity, but most of the great piles lay too far back in their own grounds to add cheer to the highway, and many were still unoccupied. Maxwell never looked at them. The soft fur rugs lay unheeded on the floor; he stared without seeing the crystal vase of roses that perfumed the car, the silver scent-bottles, card-cases, flasks, timetables, each in its place; at the silver clock, bearing Emily Suydam's cipher, that ticked precise to the minute. He was oblivious to all these details that spoke of an exacting mistress. He was vainly trying to frame sentences that should tell her husband that she was no more.

Instead, he thought of Philippa's timid answers to the police; of Dr. Carson's self-sufficiency—by the way, Carson had not mentioned the cry from Hortense Roner's room while Mrs.

Howard held the two men in talk at its door. Then he recalled last night's gloomy dinner; just four of them at the elaborate table; the servants moving about even more noiselessly than usual; Harry's white, shocked face; Mrs. Howard's ceaseless babble about "poor Emily"—their college years together, Emily's wonderful feats at basket-ball, Emily always so ambitious, so determined. . . .

The lights of another car glared, shot toward, met and passed them. Then another. Maxwell had a blurred vision of jovial faces nestled in fur collars. The owners were returning to those great illumined houses. The train must be in. They were late. Derrick had probably arrived. . . .

. . . "Poor Emily," Mrs. Howard's talk echoed in his memory, "she never got over her boy's death. You knew that child named this place? Before they bought it, while they were still considering other property, they used to speak of this as 'the one with the fir-trees,' and the baby would beg to go to fir-trees; they got to calling it Firtrees and the name stuck. It's all they have left of him. We were afraid Emily would go out of her mind when they lost him. After that she became more than ever devoted to her husband, perfectly rapt up in him and—well, a bit exacting. It has not always been easy for Derrick. You know what a favorite Derrick is with women. . . ."

Yes, and with men, too. Had half a dozen clubs taken a ballot for their most popular member, Derrick Suydam's name would have led each list. And never was man less spoiled by popularity. Doubtless his wife had been exacting. Maxwell remembered that in the early days of the marriage, before she began shutting out her husband's friends, she had complained: "I never can have Mr. Suydam to myself. Whenever the girls leave him alone, the men get hold of him." And he had consoled: "You know you wouldn't have liked a husband that no one else liked."

And now he must console Derrick!

They were coming out from between the rows of leafless trees; in the hollow below gleamed the faint lights of the station, and the train was in. How should he frame his speech? Derrick had surely loved that poor jealous, domineering woman. How tell him of her tragic end?

And then, before they reached the foot of the hill, a figure detached itself from the shadowy roadside, signalling. The chauffeur stopped the car, the footman sprang down and opened the door. It was Derrick. And somehow, by some curious intuition, Derrick *knew*.

As he stepped into the car his first words were: "I was prepared for the worst when I got your message. . . . We don't want all this glare," snapping off the light.

Prepared for the worst! For accident, for serious illness possibly, but how, Maxwell asked himself, could anyone be prepared for the story of strange and violent death he had to unfold as they sped back to Firtrees? Not a question, not a whisper helped the task. He felt his companion bracing himself to listen; sitting rigid in his corner of the car. He uttered no speculation as to the perpetrator of the crime, no outcry for vengeance on him; he made no response to assurances that the police would surely run the man down; merely sat with clenched hands and compressed lips, his features barely visible. On entering the lighted house Maxwell was startled to see how they were lined and ravaged.

At his request Maxwell waited in the private study of the master of the house, while he went alone to the room where all that was mortal of his wife now lay. When he came out his handsome face was still more pinched and gray. A curt nod seemed to indicate that his friend's presence, but not his conversation, was desired and the young man waited in pitying silence. Suydam seated himself at a small old-fashioned desk that he would not give up because it had been his mother's; it had an intricate lock and he kept a

few letters and photographs in it, though he preferred for real use the large black oak writing table, where he could spread out freely. To-night he chose the inconvenient little desk and sat there sorting out and putting away blank stationery of various sizes, as though life held nothing of more moment than this purely mechanical activity.

After a while he sent for Harry and talked to him with a composure that calmed the boy's agitation. Next he asked for Philippa and was annoyed to learn that she was still in attendance on Mrs. Roner. "Is *she* here still?" he exclaimed irritably. "How long is she going to stay?" His long, aristocratic hands moved restlessly. Maxwell realized that his nerve was breaking. At this ill-timed moment dinner was announced.

"I shall not come to dinner," Suydam exploded to the astonished butler, "not while that woman is in my house." And Gaynor vanished in a panic. Maxwell and Harry exchanged glances as they, too, left the room. Harry's lips twitched.

"Case of remorse," he murmured with something like a wink, almost before they were out of hearing. "He and Mrs. Roner had Cousin Emily pretty near crazy. He's some flirt, Cousin Rick!"

Maxwell's distaste for Harry Anderson deepened into dislike.

There were other factors in the situation that he did not like. Certain questions put by fat, shrewd old Rogers, with what they imported. Certain answers over the telephone to his own questions, with what *they* imported. These answers he had not repeated to the country inspector. Above all, Derrick's manner. What was it he missed in it? There was deep-seated grief and a horror that stamped his friend's pleasant countenance into a new likeness, that paralyzed his initiative; but—but—

"How's poor Suydam taking it?" Jack Howard asked, after dinner, genuine sympathy mixed with his curiosity.

"I don't know, I really don't know," Maxwell answered, slowly turning his wine glass and abstractedly noting the color.

"It was a terrible blow to him, of course," chimed in Mrs. Howard, "a most shocking surprise."

Surprise! Maxwell hastily set down his glass. "Yes. Oh, yes. A shocking surprise. A terrible blow." Yet the fact he uneasily sensed was that Derrick had not been surprised. That extraordinary premonition of Derrick's puzzled him. He knew himself to be the keener, the more sensitive, the more imaginative of the two, yet no vague peremptory message would have inspired him with such prophetic vision.

"If Suydam wants to know the best man to put on this case," said Howard, "The best man in the country, bar none," emphatically rapping the table with his plump, well-cared-for hand, "and I don't except Burns or Pinkerton, I can give him James Francis Funk's address."

Maxwell answered vaguely that as yet Suydam had hardly considered that matter.

"It would be the first thing I'd consider in his place," said the older man. "He'd better not delay about it. And Funk, you know, is a cut above the ordinary sleuth. College man; decent family; the kind of chap you would not mind having in the house, or even introducing to your friends. I met him at my cousins, the Vernon Forsythes. Well, what is it?"

The second butler, Joseph, stood before them, deferentially clearing his throat. "Mr. Maxwell," he spoke up. "Mr. Suydam says, sir, would you kindly come to his rooms."

Derrick's study, which opened out of his bedroom, was filled with flowers. Late as it was, the gardeners had been ordered to strip the greenhouses. Madam Suydam's old desk, the carved mantel, the long black oak table, even the window sills were heaped with roses, daffodils, cyclamen, hyacinths. They shone under the tall opal lamp,

a mass of clear pinks and yellows, creamy whites and glossy purples. Against this background of fresh gaiety silhouetted the dark drooping figure in the desk chair. He was giving orders to Matilda Cotman.

"Put them in her room," he bade her briefly. "Let nothing there be changed, but keep it full of flowers."

Matilda curtsied. She eyed him steadily with no softening of her hard, thin, middle-aged face. She carried her fragrant load away without a word of sympathy. Maxwell divined that the favorite servant of the mistress had been no favorite with the master, and that she knew it. His own heart was melting with compassion for the troubled man who now leaned back with a long sigh before he spoke.

"I sent for you, John, because there are half a dozen reporters here. I want you to see them for me." And as Maxwell did not immediately answer, he went on with his new irritability. "What ghouls reporters are! They gather like vultures to death." Then his old politeness returned. "I beg your pardon, John. I know you never were that kind of a newspaper man."

"I was exactly that kind," returned Maxwell, flushing. The one thing he never could stand was a slur on his former profession. "Except that many of these youngsters are college graduates and I was not. If there was any news going my paper had to have it. These boys are simply fulfilling their duty. Their business is to collect information."

"Just as Sam Petty's is to collect garbage," said Derrick.

Maxwell had on his lips a rejoinder as to the sanitary advantage of having garbage collected, but a glance at his host's haggard countenance stopped him. Instead he said pacifically: "I'll see the reporters for you and steer them off from bothering if I can. Some of them may know me."

Suydam shook himself like one casting off a burden. He moved with his friend toward the door.

"I'll not have them photographing my grounds and prowling through my house," he grumbled.

The younger man laid an affectionate hand on his friend's bowed shoulder. He had, if not a handsome face, an extremely expressive one; sympathy now spoke from every line of it. "We can't stop their snapshotting the grounds and we'd better let them see the library. Yes, we had, Rick," forestalling remonstrance. "If we don't they'll be declaring in print that we have something to hide."

Derrick stopped short; his hand, reaching for the knob, remained outstretched.

"Hide? Of course we have nothing to hide!" he shouted. He was more than irritated, he was pale with anger. "For Heaven's sake, don't let them get that idea into their fool heads."

"I won't," Maxwell promised.

V

AND he didn't. He put on his best manner, composed, authoritative, pleasant, to explain that the bereaved husband must be spared an interview with the men of the press. But he answered all their questions with perfect frankness, the more readily that he could call Hunter, of the *Chronicle*, White, of the *Express*, and others by name. He led them to the library and allowed them to examine and make diagrams to their hearts' content.

"Easy enough," grunted Hunter. "Long room lined with shelves. Only one door. No concealed doors behind the shelves, eh? Two small windows at the side and one big one in front. Big fireplace. Man didn't have to come down the chimney, though, with that long French window opening on the terrace. Window found open, I understand. Theory is that assailant got in and out that way. Lady asleep in chair woke up just in time to see him go, and fainted from fright."

"That is the theory."

"Object, robbery; but was frightened off before he got anything."

Maxwell nodded.

"Could we see the lady, Mrs.—er—Roamer?"

"Roner," Maxwell corrected. "No. Her physician will not allow any one to see her. She is a delicate woman and is completely prostrated. Yesterday she made a great effort in the interests of justice and saw the local chief of police, Dr. Carson and I being also present. The doctor doped her up, and supported her, and hung over her with the greatest solicitude." Unconsciously to himself Maxwell's tone grew dry. "He helped her through the ordeal all he could. She was a perfect wreck and her voice was barely audible. And after all, she could give little information. Fortunately for her, she didn't actually see the crime committed. Monday, you remember, was a rainy day, and the library was dim. All she knows is that something suddenly awakened her; she saw Mrs. Suydam on the floor, and a man with a bloody dagger in his hand standing over her. In her terror she cried out something, she doesn't remember what, and the man threw the dagger from him and sprang through the window; then she lost consciousness."

"Having first rung the bell," White added perfunctorily.

Maxwell nodded again. That appeared obvious. The murderer wouldn't ring and his victim couldn't. No, the police hadn't been able to get a line on any tramp or suspicious character in the neighborhood. They were doing their best. They had several important clues—

"Oh, clues in the hands of the police!" Hunter openly derided, while the others grinned.

"Say, what you folks want to do," advised White, "is to offer a big reward and engage a first-class detective."

"We are doing both," declared Maxwell unblushingly; Derrick must make his statement good. You never could tell how grief would act upon temperament, yet it vexed him that Derrick thought only of sentimental observances instead of taking the course any man so widowed ought to take.

He promised that as soon as handbills had been drawn up a copy would be sent to each newspaper. He herded his men toward the door where Joseph waited to usher them out. Two of the flock evaded him at the last minute and came back, followed by their disconcerted shepherd.

"Say, White and I just thought of something. Where's that bell she rang?"

"Why—it must be—Maxwell's eyes ran over the walls closely covered with portraits and autographs of literary celebrities. "'Pon my soul I don't know. Where is it, Joseph?"

Joseph shook his head. "I don't know neither, sir. No one ain't rung it since I been here."

"That's odd. Fetch Mr. Anderson."

"I don't wonder you couldn't find that bell," Harry marched in briskly. "No one could unless he was told. It's under this genealogical chart. See?" lifting it up. They saw. "The walls are so full Cousin Emily had to hang our family tree over the bell. Simple enough when you know."

"I wonder," Maxwell pondered audibly, the reporters having nodded their thanks and withdrawn. "I wonder whether Mrs. Roner knew."

"She didn't," said the blithe Harry. "I remember just a few days ago she got chilly, sitting in the library, and she came out into the hall to ring for her maid to fetch her scarf. It's almost a joke the way that little old bell hides its modest head."

"I suppose you showed her where it was," observed Maxwell, some undefined feeling so weighting his deep voice that the youth answered almost apologetically.

"Why, no, I didn't. I suppose I should have shown her, but Howard was waiting for me in the billiard-room. No, she doesn't know to this day."

The little incident struck Maxwell peculiarly; he wanted to think it over alone. Nodding dismissal to Harry, he stepped out through the long window, lighted a cigar to help his meditations, and walked slowly along the dark and

chilly terrace, where no one was likely to intrude upon him. If Mrs. Roner had not rung the bell, who had? Obviously some one familiar with Firtees. Derrick? Absent. Harry? Philippa? Ridiculous! One of the older servants? They had no business in the library so late in the afternoon.

His foot crushed a soft mass. He bent to see what it was, holding his lighted cigar down. Roses, hyacinths, daffodils! He knew by their fragrance before the gleam touched their clear pinks and yellows and creamy whites; thrown out in a heap on the wet flags. He glanced up at the dark walls of the huge house, looming over him like a mediæval stronghold.

"Mr. Maxwell!"

Harry had followed him. With his foot Maxwell instinctively thrust the discarded flowers further back against the ivy-clad walls.

"Harry, what lighted windows are those overhead?"

"On the second floor, Cousin Emily's rooms. Didn't you know? Those higher up, in the tower, are Mrs. Roner's. But, I say, Mr. Maxwell—Mr. Maxwell, I came after you to—I wanted—"

"Well, Harry?" Slowly Maxwell brought his attention down from the frowning castle and its lights. "I beg your pardon?" He became aware that the young man hesitating before him in the dark was trying to say something, and that the something was hard to say.

"Mr. Maxwell," with an effort, "you aren't the kind that preaches to a chap."

"No. I don't preach." Maxwell laughed.

"And I believe you'd help a chap out of a hole."

"It depends upon how big a hole," more cautiously.

Harry seemed to fidget silently.

"Well, I'll be hanged if I'll bother Philippa again!" he burst forth.

"No; I wouldn't trouble your sister."

Maxwell was surprised to find how sure he felt that that little vixen should not be troubled; equally sure that the

youngster had troubled her often and often.

"You see you're a writer, too." Harry was seeking grounds of persuasion. "You'll understand my temperament."

"Well! well! get it out. What is it? Money, I suppose."

At all events Maxwell understood temperament's most frequent stumbling block. Money it was. Harry wouldn't dream of borrowing, only that it was now a sure thing that he could repay a loan promptly. Just as soon as all this excitement was over and Cousin Emily's estate was settled up. Possibly Mr. Maxwell did not know that Cousin Emily's property was inherited from her grandfather, Harry's great-grandfather, and that on her death without heirs it must pass to the other granddaughter's children. Gee! it would be good to be free to spend. Cousin Emily had given him and Philippa a home, but she had always been tight-fisted in the matter of allowances. And what a row she raised if either ran over it! Oh, yes! Anybody could get a copy of his great-grandfather's will at the Surrogate's Office, and assure himself just how matters stood. It was evident that Harry had raised money on his expectations more than once.

That night Maxwell slept well for the first time since he had been at Firtees, and woke early to a brighter world than he had been living in. The water-gold of early spring flooded through his east window, bringing with it a distinct sensation of cheer. Yet nothing especially pleasant had happened. He had satisfied Harry's immediate demands; Philippa would be spared one kind of trouble, at least. He, himself, would be spared another kind, an overdose of Philippa's brother's society; experience had taught him that no man seeks the companionship of a creditor. These two little points were worth something, yet not sufficient to account for his unwonted good spirits. Perhaps it was a rebound from the depression of the past few days; perhaps it was because the worst hideousness was over—the murder, the need of telling Derrick, the

inquest, the police, the reporters. To be sure, there was still the funeral, but he would not think of that. He was even glad that Derrick had remained immovably averse to engaging detectives. Derrick insisted that Inspector Rogers could attend to everything, and that Maxwell must attend to Inspector Rogers.

Maxwell whistled as he dressed. He was downstairs at an improbably early hour; long before breakfast time. No one was stirring, apparently, except two maids tidying up the lower floor, whom he passed with an affable "good morning" and went outdoors. Something in him clamored for sunlight and the open.

There was a feeling of spring in the air. It breathed both the balm and the chill of spring; the ground felt soft with the going of frost, and the cold sun shone brightly. He noticed tiny, vivid buds nestling against the twigs under the wintry green of the hedge. Right here was where the flowers had been last night. They were gone now; whosever hand had cast them furiously forth from the window of Mrs. Suydam's room had doubtless removed them. He passed into the old-fashioned garden. No flowers were blooming there yet, the box-bordered beds were still covered with straw, but in some sheltered corners bulbs had been set out. The whole enclosure was indeed well protected by arbor-vitae hedges six feet high, except where, directly opposite the entrance, a long pergola led to the rose garden.

Almost at once Maxwell became aware that some one was moving on the other side of the hedge. The interstices in its winter-thinned foliage were alternately closed and unclosed as something passed to and fro behind them. Filled with the wildest suspicions as to who could be lurking in the grounds at seven o'clock in the morning, he sprang through the nearest opening and caught—Philippa!

VI

THEY reeled apart; he spluttering apologies, she with eyes dilated and

white lips that presently smiled wanly. "I thought I was capturing a thief," he said.

"And I thought you were—I thought you were—" She did not finish.

Whoever she thought he was, her relief that he was himself was patent. The momentary shock broke the little ice between them. Philippa explained that a small stair and private door led directly into the garden from the wing where Cousin Emily's and Mrs. Roner's rooms were, and she found the early morning her best opportunity of getting a breath of air. Mrs. Roner was asleep then; she could not bear to be left alone when she was awake.

The girl's tone was uncomplaining, but her cheeks were colorless and violet circles lay under the troubled amber of her eyes. Poor little black kitten, by nature so gay and mischievous! A wave of revolt against circumstances swept over the young man. But he merely hinted at the advisability of engaging a nurse.

Philippa shook her small, dark head. No, a nurse was out of the question; besides she *preferred* staying upstairs with Mrs. Roner.

Nevertheless she was eager for every detail of the happenings from which she had excluded herself, and she welcomed Maxwell's sympathy. Under the warmth of his manner she grew more like herself. Her lips lost their sorrowful droop, the air brought roses to her cheeks. They talked with a new and happy friendliness. They lingered consciously over their tête-à-tête in poor Emily Suydam's old-fashioned garden. They knelt and poked the strawed plants to find gray woolly buds huddled together as if for warmth; reddish leaves closely folded against the ground; hard points like green ivory pricking through it.

"A few warm days will bring them hopping out," Philippa prophesied childishly.

And Maxwell felt that the season of mildness and promise had indeed set in. Philippa looked to him prettier than ever, though paler and slenderer in her

mourning. She was playing off her innocent coquetties on him, her upward glances, her vivacious little gestures, and he enjoyed it. A girl doesn't flirt with a man she dislikes; at least a girl like Philippa doesn't. When, after a golden hour, she declared with a sigh that she must return to her charge, Maxwell urged that such strict confinement would affect her health. He also upbraided her for absenting herself from the dinner table and leaving him alone and undefended to Mrs. Howard's tiresome tongue.

"But I don't," she protested. "You have plenty of protectors. There's Mr. Howard—"

"What company is he?"

"And Harry."

He looked at her reproachfully.

"Oh, I know that you don't care for my poor brother," she said, flushing. "Well, there's—there's—Mr. Suydam."

Her hesitation and her formal manner of naming a relative struck him even while he replied dolefully that Mr. Suydam also had his meals served in his own apartment.

"Does he? Does he really? Why?"

Her bright eyes were twisting his thought out of him as a corkscrew works a cork from a bottle.

"Well, since you ask me," slowly, "I believe he is unwilling to meet Mrs. Roner, and does not know how soon she may leave her room. He has had an overwhelming blow, and she is closely associated with it. He shrinks from the very sight of her."

"I should think he might!" Philippa surprised him by declaring. "Mercy! What's that?"

They had settled on an Italian stone seat backed against the high hedge; they had not noticed a rustling and crackling behind them, without wind to cause it. Now several twigs fell on Philippa and startled her. Some one was deliberately breaking them off, as if to make a peep-hole.

Maxwell thrust his hand through the hole and caught another hand. Philippa sprang upon the seat and looked over the bushes.

"Why Matilda, how you frightened me!" she laughed nervously. "Why are you pulling down the hedge?"

"Greens for *her* room," said Matilda Cotman laconically. Her faded eyes surveyed them steadily; she made no attempt to release her bony wrist from Maxwell's grasp.

"Mr. Suydam gave you a quantity of flowers from the greenhouses," he reminded her.

Matilda Cotman shook her head. "*She* never cared for hothouse flowers."

"True," said Philippa softly, "Cousin Emily loved best what grows out under the sky. Take them up, Matilda. In another week we'll have her own crocuses and daffodils."

Irresolutely Maxwell loosened his hold. The woman lumbered off, stopping here and there to add to the sheaf of greenery upon her arm. He stood looking after her suspiciously.

"I believe she was eavesdropping."

"I shouldn't wonder," said Philippa carelessly. "She always was an inquisitive old thing. She has to know all that goes on in the family. I was afraid it was one of those dreadful policemen."

"There is no need of being afraid of them. I'd be more afraid of that grim creature."

"Oh, Matilda is a faithful soul. She was absolutely devoted to Cousin Emily, and next to her she loves Harry and me. You see she was the baby's nurse originally, then she had charge of us when we were small, and when we outgrew her Cousin Emily made a lady's-maid of her, so as not to lose her, Matilda's an institution."

"Just the same I consider it pretty cool of her to throw out Rick's flowers."

Maxwell spoke with some heat, but Philippa defended as if it were a matter of course: "You see, Matilda cannot bear Mr. Suydam. And it is true that Cousin Emily always had bouquets of laurel and pine until the first spring flowers came."

"Why do you say 'Mr. Suydam'?"

Maxwell inquired curiously. "You used to call him 'Cousin Rick.'"

"I—I did when you were here before," Philippa admitted. "But he isn't really my cousin, you know. And—I am older now. And—and—" in her turn she pulled a twig and began pinching its aromatic needles.

"When I was here before," he argued, "you were twelve and Rick was thirty."

The girl tried to turn the subject. "And you were—let me see—twenty-seven? twenty-eight?" With her pretty head on one side, calculating.

"Twenty-four," he corrected. Seven years ago it had flattered him to be taken for more than his age, but not now, and not by a girl of nineteen. "Twenty-four. But I don't see what—"

"Was that all? It seemed a great age to me in those days. I had to be respectful to you," she hurried on, laughing. "I was a child and you were a grown-up, an Olympian." He saw that she was avoiding the question. "How kind you used to be to me then!" A sudden wistful note in her voice touched him.

"Not 'used to be,'" he protested. "I was kind then and I am kind now. Kinder. Try me."

She gave him a lovely timid glance from under curled lashes and turned away. "I wish I dared," she sighed. "There is something I want you to do for me."

"There isn't anything I wouldn't do for you," he answered eagerly. For if haughty, naughty, saucy Philippa had attracted him even while she repelled, this grave, gentle young creature moved his heart of hearts.

The girl looked at him, hesitated, looked again. "What I want—" she began, and stopped.

"Yes?" encouragingly.

"What I want—Oh, very, very much!" She shook her head mournfully. "But I know you won't do it."

"Yes I will. Go on. You want—"

"I want to hear Inspector Rogers' report to you."

This was unexpected. He did not

quite like it. But under imploring amber eyes he had no strength.

"Well," slowly, "I think I can promise to tell you all he says."

"Oh, no!" eagerly. "That isn't what I mean. I want to hear him myself. I want to watch his expression. You might forget something, and this is so—so important, you know. And I would never repeat anything. You have no idea how good I am at keeping things to myself. Why! if I told you all I know— Now really, *really*, Mr. Maxwell, is there any reason I should not hear just what the police think about Cousin Emily's death? I am her nearest relative."

Maxwell's readiness chilled a little as she went on begging. What was it the child knew that she would not tell him? He smiled inwardly at that. It was hardly fair to Rogers to do what she asked. Yet he would have been willing to give her a report of Rogers' report. After all, there was no great difference. It was true that she was Mrs. Suydam's nearest relative. And there were tears in her eyes.

"Oh, very well," he capitulated hastily, "I am to see Rogers after luncheon in the library."

"In the library!" She recoiled. "Where it happened?"

"It is the most private place in the house. But if you do not wish to come—"

"Oh, I'll be there."

They walked toward the house in silence. When they reached the tower door she turned and studied his sober face. Then, gradually letting her teeth gleam in a shy smile, she whispered: "Do you really want me at dinner to-night?"

"Do I?"

"I—might—possibly—come." The words fell slowly, separately, sweetly, like drops of honey. And then she ran upstairs.

She left Maxwell convinced that she was concealing something that bore upon the crime. Probably something that seemed to implicate Derrick. Else why her new aversion to the attractive

man who had been for years her kind and affectionate guardian? For Suydam's sake it was his duty to get to the bottom of this. It would be a delightful duty, now that the pretty little wild thing was somewhat tamed to his presence. And it would be an easy one. He had merely to provoke her hot temper and her tongue would run away with her.

VII

INSPECTOR ROGERS sat at ease in the great library chair in which Hortense Roner once lay swooning; sat so deep in it that only the blunt tips of his shoes touched the hearth rug where Emily Suydam's body had been found.

Maxwell found the stout police officer at once shrewder and easier to deal with than he had anticipated. Rogers was entirely willing to leave Mr. Suydam undisturbed; to hold his consultations and make his reports, such as they were, with Mr. Suydam's friend; Rogers was even satisfied with Mr. Suydam's decision not to call in a detective from the city. Maxwell tried to put this on the flattering ground of complete confidence in the country chief's ability, but remained far from sure that the flattery had not been seen through. Rogers' heavy lids lifted lazily and his dull brown eyes sharpened.

"Humph!" he grunted. "Well, that's all right too. I have a good man following up every trail in the city myself, and—"

"What city trails are there in this crime?" asked Maxwell sharply.

Rogers stared ox-like and counter-queried: "Say, we haven't struck much of a trail at this end, have we? So isn't it only right to try what we can do there? I'm an old sleuth-dog; I nose about everywhere. I don't mind telling you, Mr. Maxwell, you being a reasonable man, that the doings of every person in this house—visitors, servants and all—are being pretty thoroughly investigated. Pret-ty tho-roughly," he ruminated. "That's only right, ain't it?"

"Oh, I know all about that," said

Maxwell hastily. There were certain uncomfortable facts, early brought to light, which he preferred not to hear retold. "You and I have been over that ground before. Unless," something in Rogers' manner inviting question, "there are—are there new developments?"

"Not so much new developments as—" Rogers thrust his bulky leg out to ease the way into his pocket and drew forth a package. "Do you mind if I chew, Mr. Maxwell?" he entreated. "Bad habit, I know, but I've got it, and I always talk easier with a cud in my jaw."

He chewed and talked intermittently, ponderingly, growing more and more rustic in his speech as he went on. Mr. Maxwell must remember that no suspicious character had been traced to the neighborhood—"an' we'd 'a' found 'em if the' was any. Put it the' wasn't any. Then the' was the time to think of. Not two hours could ha' passed between the murder an' the discovery, most likely not one."

"Well, he knew every living human that had took a train to or from any station within ten miles that night. He needn't tell Maxwell that. An' he knew every human who had entered any house; an' 'twas a dirty night, a man'd be likely to seek shelter. Again, the' was no robbery; nothing was missing. Then what was the object of the crime? Did anyone hate Mrs. Suydam? Did anyone wish her out of the way? Had anyone quarreled with her? Those were the questions to answer. Or else, who had anything to gain by her death? Not her husband; he stood only to lose by it. Who would inherit her fortune? Why, her two young cousins. Now, of course, the violence of the blow that was struck put the young lady out of the question—oh! Mr. Maxwell needn't jump so! Of course *she* was out of the question. Entirely. Absolutely. Teetotally.

"Then we won't mention her." Maxwell was indeed standing erect and angry over the lolling officer. For somewhere behind his broad back, perhaps

in that jog between the bookcases, there crouched a slim, palpitating daughter of wrath. "And where are you getting to with all this? I think I can guess, and you are wrong, utterly wrong, Rogers. See here, you are banking on the theory that a man's hand was indicated by the force of the blow. Let me remind you that men are not equally muscular. You and I may be," eying the recumbent constable as though he would enjoy testing this, "but not all. Take," he gulped, "take young Harry Anderson. Did you ever happen to notice his hands? They are as delicate as a woman's, more so than some women's. His sister makes a stronger drive at golf; so did his cousin, Mrs. Suydam. And, by the way, Harry was run away with once, when he tried riding her horse; *she* could hold Plummet in; *he* couldn't."

Rogers sat up and faced him squarely.

"Then find me some other person who was in the library at the right time, Mr. Maxwell. Dr. Carson thinks Mrs. Suydam had been dead about two hours when he saw her body at nigh on to eight o'clock. Well, now; young Anderson tells us he was in the library at half-past five, staid a few minutes, then went into the living-room and had a cup of tea. *Where did he go next?*"

Maxwell took a meditative turn among the shelves, then stood leaning one shoulder against them, with a vague notion of blocking a rush.

"The folks in the living-room—you, Miss Anderson, all of 'em—stays there chatting till after six. You all agree that he isn't there when you break up, though no one remembers just when he left. Says he went up to his room and had a nap. Anyhow, slips away quietly and isn't seen till he comes along, terribly upset, after the murder. Too upset to lend a hand about anything, I heard you say."

"Is it your theory," demanded Maxwell, still standing and looking down from his superior height, his gray eyes quizzical, "that Mr. Anderson murdered his cousin and then went in and had a cup of tea with her guests?"

"Might have been that way," doggedly. "But no," recollecting, "Mrs. Rorer was there alone that time he looked into the library and out again. They both testified to that. Might have been looking for Mrs. Suydam then and didn't find her. Might have gone back a little later. There's about two hours of his time unaccounted for, if he didn't take that nap. And maybe you don't know that there was bad blood between them. Why, him and Mrs. Suydam fought scandalous. The servants all talked about it."

And Philippa listening!

"Rogers, this is nonsense," Maxwell protested.

"Nonsense, is it? See here," he pointed a stubby forefinger, "*who rung that there bell?* Not a many folks knew where that bell was stuck, and they are all accounted for 'ceptin' him."

"Nonsense!" repeated Maxwell.

"Maybe you knew," Rogers went on obstinately, "that young Anderson was over his ears in debt? You did? Knew he had a show-girl on the string, a free spender? I hear he's promised her diamonds. Knew his creditors was plaguing the life out of him?"

"Yes, I know that." At any minute Philippa might break out.

"An' that he couldn't get no money out of his cousin? An' that he'd come in for money when she died? You knew that, too? Well, I can only say that yours is a confiding and unsuspecting nature, Mr. Maxwell. One more thing. *He's begun paying off his debts.* Where'd he get that money from?"

"From me," answered Maxwell promptly. "And I believe all the other trifles you make so much of could be as easily explained."

"Well, I ain't saying he done it. I'm only saying he *could* have done it. Things was so he could have, and we haven't yet found anyone else who could. There's somebody rapping at the door."

"Come in," Maxwell called. No one entered. Joseph, very respectable and

respectful, stood without, and delivered his message; he would not cross that dreaded threshold. Mr. Suydam begged that Mr. Maxwell would come to him as soon as he was at leisure.

"Very well. Say I will be with him directly. There wasn't anything more, was there, Rogers?"

"No, sir. I guess that's all. Where's my hat? Oh, yes, here."

"Good-bye, then. Come again when you have something more to tell me. So far, Mr. Sleuth-dog, you are surely barking up the wrong tree."

"Well, maybe. May-be! There's another tree I could try. The woods is full of 'em, Mr. Maxwell."

Hardly had he gone than Philippa sprang from her hiding-place, flushed with wrath against Rogers and dewy with gratitude to Maxwell. She shook hands with him again and again. To think that that wretch of a country policeman dared speak so of Harry! And how splendidly Mr. Maxwell had defended him! But he shouldn't have lent Harry any money. She herself—

"I am not worrying about the money," said Maxwell gaily. "I have more confidence in your brother than you have. Mind you, you are not to tell him or anyone else what you have overheard. You must keep your indignation to yourself."

"It was really no more than I ought to have expected," said the girl more soberly, "for I knew that the servants gossiped about Harry's disagreements with Cousin Emily. She would go into such rages, especially of late, since she has had other troubles, poor dear, and she would speak so loud. Harry was always wanting money and she was always scolding him for it. And she was right. I have to scold him, too. Harry is wilful and extravagant, but not—not—Oh, Mr. Maxwell," drawing a long breath, "when such abominable things are said of your brother oughtn't you to tell—oughtn't you to clear his name at any cost?"

Maxwell was about to say the obvious thing, that she ought certainly to tell all she knew; yet why say the

obvious thing to a girl of Philippa's intelligence? Why her reluctance to the natural course? Why were her eyes fixed on him with such strained anxiety? Why was she clasping her hands like one in pain? Strange conjectures flitted through his mind. He found himself saying in a puzzled way:

"Do you mean at any cost to some one else, or to yourself?"

She moved away from him and stood looking out of the small window. He could not see her face and she said no more. Presently he bethought him of Derrick's summons. He began to speak of his friend's mourning.

"Never have I witnessed such consuming grief," he told Philippa's averted head. "I used to think him—well, gentle, sweet-natured, chivalrous, but a bit light, a bit careless. I supposed that he loved his wife, but not like this. His whole character has been changed by sorrow."

Philippa still had her back to him, drumming on the panes. "Yes," she said, in a low tone, "by remorse. He did love his wife once, I daresay. He has loved many. He is just a philanderer, a philanderer born. He doesn't mean much by it, it is a way of his to say sweet things and look caresses. And women adore him. Poor Cousin Emily did, and she was insanely jealous."

Maxwell murmured that he had noticed that.

"Oh, but she had a big, loving heart, Mr. Maxwell," the girl turned to him in quick defence. "I don't believe many people love as she did. Why, since her child died she hasn't had a thought or drawn a breath that was not for her husband. And, poor dear, her devotion bored him!"

Maxwell could readily believe that. He did not say so, but made a vague commiserating sound.

"Oh, how sorry, sorry I have been for her of late!" The tears were falling down Philippa's changeful face. "Don't I know how kind and pleasant and delightful he can be? Haven't I lived under his roof for seven years? Yet he

broke his wife's heart. Think of that when you feel like pitying him."

VIII

MAXWELL did think of it when he rejoined Derrick.

Nothing in this strange tragedy had appeared to him stranger than the change in his friend. Yet who can account for the ways in which grief will manifest itself? Derrick, the most conventional, the least eccentric of men, seemed developing hourly almost morbid fancies regarding the last tributes to his wife. Yesterday, in settling details of the funeral, he had insisted that he would have no strange hands profaning his dead. Anything necessary to be done must be done by her faithful maid, Matilda Cotman. As Emily Suydam had clothed herself on the last day of her life so should she go to her tomb; in whatever trailing negligee of soft lace she had donned after her perfumed bath that fatal afternoon; with her wedding and engagement rings—all she ever wore—upon her hand; the diamond locket—his wedding gift—from which she never parted, about her throat.

And the discovery which now seemed to have transformed into a madman Derrick the placable, the amiable, the insouciant,—Derrick the grief-stricken widower, was this: There was no locket upon Mrs. Suydam's body!

"Certainly not," Maxwell assured him. "She wore no jewelry at all. Such a handsome piece as you mention could not possibly have escaped my notice, to say nothing of the police. The absence of jewelry was what started the robbery theory, but your wife's maid wiped that out with the information that her mistress seldom wore jewelry."

"She always wore my locket," cried Suydam. "Always, I tell you. Don't I know? Send for Matilda," passionately pressing the electric bell. He stood clenching and unclenching his hands till the maid came.

To Maxwell's astonishment Matilda

instantly agreed with her master. Her mistress invariably wore the diamond locket; she wore it under her gown by day and on her bare neck in evening dress.

Why, then, had she omitted to tell the coroner this important fact?

In her excitement and distress, she explained with perfect stolidity, she had not thought to, and no one had questioned her. She was sure Mrs. Suydam had the jewel on that morning. Yes, she meant Tuesday morning. She could not speak for the afternoon, because she was ill and had not seen her lady. It was Mrs. Suydam's custom to bathe and rest for a while before dinner; at six, or thereabouts, she usually summoned her maid to help her dress, but on the day of her death it was certain that no maid had been summoned. As far as could be discovered no one had beheld the locket since Matilda Cotman saw it at her mistress's throat that morning.

To Maxwell, curiously watching events, there seemed a shade of defiance in the respectable Cotman's manner, a glint of malice in the small eye she held steadily on her master throughout his fierce questioning, his bursts of anger, his perplexed silences. No such suspicion occurred to Derrick. After he had dismissed her he strode the room's length twice before he spoke. It was with something like a groan that he halted in front of his friend.

"My God! Maxwell, you don't know—you don't know what this means."

"I think I do," Maxwell answered.

Derrick startled him by tossing his long arms in the air; a theatric gesture, quite unlike him, a gesture of abandonment.

"I give it up! Good God! it is impossible! Impossible! . . . Yet it is gone . . . and she always wore it . . . no one could be base enough . . ."

"Someone was base enough to commit murder."

"There are times," said Derrick strangely, "when theft is viler than murder."

Maxwell pondered that a moment,

gave it up and said: "At any rate, taking the locket and leaving Mrs. Rorer's jewelry shows that theft *was* the object and that the thief was interrupted or frightened off."

Derrick was not listening. He had thrown himself upon the lounge, staring down with knitted brows and thought turned inward.

"It may prove a valuable clue." Surely Derrick did not value diamonds above his wife, yet this slighter loss roused his dormant desire for vengeance.

"Clue?" lifting a face that expressed a curious mixture of outrage and amazed contempt. "Yes, clue! When they find the locket they will find the murderer. Let them follow that clue—" His excitement was gaining, he spoke as if defying an enemy, as if forgetting Maxwell's presence. "They *shall* follow it, I say, lead where it will. Get me the address of that detective Howard thinks so much of,—Funk, wasn't that his name? I'll send for him. And here," he cleared a space at the long writing table, "I'll write out an exact description of the locket and offer a reward. Hand me some of the large sheets of paper out of the desk drawer at the left, will you, John. No, not that little drawer; the big one underneath."

Maxwell shut the little drawer quickly. Even in the act a brilliant object caught the light of the desk lamp and flashed an instantaneous picture on his retina. After he had given Suydam a quire of legal cap and seen him bend over it, he closed his eyes for a moment and called the picture back: A glittering heart on a golden ground.

"Will this do?" Derrick read aloud: "A large gold locket, oval in shape and studded with diamonds; three very large stones forming a heart-shaped centre";—"Yes"; Maxwell mentally verified the description—"On the obverse the names 'Derrick—Emily' in small brilliants; inside a fine miniature of 'Derrick Suydam and a lock of a baby's hair.' What reward shall I offer? Five hundred? A thou-

sand? Why! where are you, John?"

Maxwell had silently left the room. He could not speak to Derrick just then; it was a physical impossibility; his tongue would not move; his brain would not frame a question that was not an accusation. Yet it would have been simpler to say at once: "I saw that diamond locket in your desk," than to say at some future date: "I saw it and in my consternation I kept still."

Was this what Philippa knew, poor child? Philippa, in whom was clear innocence and fearless youth; Philippa, with the quick temper and the honest yellow-brown gaze, and the merry kitten face—that was merry no longer? They were going to be friends. He would win her confidence, she had said that he might see her at dinner. "I—might—possibly—come." The darling! She would not tantalize him. She would come.

She came, his little lady of the garden, with the eyes like stars, looking taller and slimmer in her lustreless black; and whiter, too; perhaps the black was accountable for that. She came, and dinner was suddenly a festival. Maxwell's spirits soared. He would have been surprised to know how he carried other people's spirits up with him. His gay humor infected them, helped by a general reaction against the gloom they had been living under. Mrs. Howard clearly was tired of it; Mr. Howard again ventured to show an epicure's appreciation of the famous Firtees chef; Harry chattered freely once more. A genuine sense of well-being suffused itself around the table, like warmth and cheer among shipwrecked folk gathered about a fire.

Did the warmth and cheer penetrate to Derrick's study and lure him forth? Suddenly he was in the room. Maxwell caught a smothered exclamation, knew that the girl next to him had started from her seat. He rose from his own, leaned forward and covered her confusion with vociferous welcome to his host. He sensed rather than heard her slip away behind him.

By the time Harry had offered to re-

sign the head of the table, and Derrick had refused to take it, and Gaynor had brought him another chair, and the Howards had made a remark apiece, and Derrick had found time to look around with "Where's Philippa? I thought she was here," Maxwell was ready for him.

"She was till a minute ago. She went out just as you came in. She thought Mrs. Roner needed her."

Then he saw, as he had expected, a shadow fall over his host's countenance. He relapsed into gloom. He did not stay long with them, after all.

Why was it Rick could not tolerate even a mention of Mrs. Roner? Why was it Philippa studiously avoided Rick?

IX

MR. FUNK was, as Harry put it, "a different breed o' cat" from Inspector Rogers in education and social standing. He had an air of dignity heightened by a really noble brow, over which a lock of hair was wont to fall. Mrs. Howard said his profile was like Napoleon's, and Maxwell later discovered in him something of that great man's love of dramatic effect. At first glance his spare figure, his hard, clean-cut, clean-shaven face, appeared but little older than Harry's own. He employed a first-class tailor, and he wore white spats.

Unobtrusive, but observant, he was present at the funeral. This, indeed, was so large that a stranger more or less was not noticed. Not only did every least member of the Suydams' enormous acquaintance attend these final rites, but the entire countryside swarmed into the churchyard. Villages far removed from Firtees poured forth their population. A path for the mourners had to be forced through crowds who gazed their fill at the tall, black-clad widower, at Philippa, with face invisible behind her crape veil, at Harry, who squirmed and longed for a similar shelter.

To Maxwell was delegated the duty of escorting Mr. Funk over the house,

He insisted, however, that Derrick must at least see the man.

"Have Rogers in, too, then, and let me get rid of them both at once," said their unwilling employer.

He received them languidly, lying at full length on the leathern couch in the study where he now spent his days. He was at no pains to conceal his distaste for his company, nor his regret that he had engaged Mr. Funk, but the latter appeared unaware of any lack of cordiality.

As they talked, Maxwell thought the city detective competent but conceited. For his benefit they went over events from the beginning, but found that he had familiarized himself with every circumstance of the case. He had a way of flashing unexpected scraps of knowledge at them that affected Maxwell as the intellectual complement of the unseasonable white that dazzled the rustics in the cemetery.

Funk was inclined to belittle points that Rogers regarded as important. Rogers' latest discovery was that Harry had given Fiordelisa, the dancer, a diamond ornament, "what they call a leveler." At this Funk laughed; he had seen the *la-vallière*, giving the word a Parisian pronunciation; he had even seen the bill for it; it was a mere trifle, a hundred dollars' worth. Moreover, Harry hadn't yet paid for it.

"Keep the boy's name out of this," Derrick ordered wearily.

Both detectives looked taken aback. Rogers frowned. Funk's blue eyes narrowed, but he spoke smoothly: "Quite right, Mr. Suydam, quite right." Then sharply: "I am glad you offered a good reward for the locket, for I shall find it within twenty-four hours."

"Big talk," muttered Rogers, still frowning.

A strange expression passed over Suydam's face.

"Shall you?" he addressed Funk. "Then you think it is not far off?"

Funk threw his forelock back with a boastful jerk of his head. "Near or far, I undertake to find it."

"Damn theatrical!" grunted Rogers.

"And as you said yourself," Funk went on, "when we get the locket we get the murderer. Why, how ill you look! Are you faint? A glass of water. . . ."

Derrick gulped the water. "Thank you. I am not quite well. Any exertion. . . . Perhaps we have talked long enough." He waved a dismissal.

Feeling that his friend had verged upon discourtesy, Maxwell good-naturedly accompanied the detectives to the front door. Rogers marched in sulky silence, but Funk discoursed agreeably, his eyes the while taking in everything within range.

At the foot of the steps they met Howard, who, starved for entertainment, greeted Funk with positive effusion. He made them accompany him to the far end of the terrace, where he presented Funk to Mrs. Howard, Philippa and Harry with something of a flourish, and began drawing out some of his past experiences. Rogers hung around with the awkwardness of a man who knows he is not welcome but does not quite know how to withdraw. Funk was at his ease and Maxwell had to admit that he talked well.

Howard was tactless enough to ask if he had formed any opinion on the present case; the two women's eyes flamed inquiry, but Funk could only be won to vaguely disparaging local theories.

He was not, so to speak, pinning his faith to Dr. Carson; the time might vary on either side of the two hours the physician allowed. And in regard to its being a man's hand—well, if Dr. Carson had his experience in crimes of violence. . . . Perhaps they remembered how Mrs. Lydia Cushing, the farmer's wife, had cut her burly husband to pieces with an ax? The women shuddered and he turned to lighter tales. How the fine emerald on his little finger had been given him for tracing a big jewelry theft to a bedridden woman. How when old Jane Hollister's silver was stolen she chased the burglars half a mile and caught them both. They wished they had tackled a man.

"In short," said Philippa with her

nose in the air, "you think with Mr. Kipling that the female of the species is more deadly than the male."

"Oh, no," civilly. "I think with Mr. Shaw that you never can tell. But that name of 'weaker sex' is misleading. Wasn't it proved that little Lillian Elwell strangled her aged uncle with her own hands? Small hands, mind you; wore a five and a half glove; couldn't stretch an octave on the piano. A slender girl, she was, much the same build as Miss Anderson."

Maxwell's blood boiled at the comparison, but he refrained from speech. Funk had a catlike way of first purring and then scratching. Philippa sailed away with her head high, and the other members of the household perforce accompanied her. The two detectives now turned in the opposite direction along the terrace towards the gate.

"We've got rid of the gallery for a bit," said Funk in a satisfied tone. "Inspector, do you know what *cherches la femme* means? Take it from me, a woman holds the key to our riddle. Now go slow. I've got to look around."

Maxwell, glancing back as his party turned the corner of the house, noticed the two detectives moving very slowly. They came to a sudden halt. He saw the smaller man glance up at the ivied wall, then bend to the ground.

"By Jove! the chap has found something," Harry breathed in his ear.

He had not known that Harry, too, was watching, yet he might have known, for the boy was always watching the police. Their methods apparently held a fascination for his famous temperament.

"Let's go see," he now urged, and they hurried back.

Perhaps Funk would have preferred not to answer questions. He stood for a minute with his hand closed, studying their countenances and scowling till his forelock hung down over eyes that were blue slits.

"What windows are those up there?" he asked, jerking his head backwards.

"Cousin Emily's rooms," answered Harry. Maxwell remembered asking

the same question in the same place.

Rogers' fat face was crimson and his lips kept up an excited murmur. The city man opened his hand; there lay a golden oval with a glittering heart at its centre. Stupefied, Maxwell turned it over on the man's palm. Harry gave a low whistle.

"Cousin Emily's locket!" His eyes dilated.

Funk nodded. "And now, Mr. Anderson, you'll please get us up quietly into that room."

Literally without a word Harry led them upstairs and threw open the door of a pleasant room draped in old rose and furnished with all the pretty knick-nacks of carved ivory and old porcelain that a luxury-loving woman collects about her. It looked as if its owner might return at any moment. A window was partly open, so was a closet, from which protruded the edge of a pink silk negligée; pink fur-edged slippers stood at the hearth; a fire burned on the brass andirons; its heat brought out the spicy aroma of pine branches that filled tall crystal vases and evergreen twigs floating in shallow silver bowls.

All of them but Funk had seen, had searched this room, and Funk did not even look around him. One hand was clenched upon the locket, the other felt in his pocket; his eyes were riveted on Harry's pale face.

"Now, Mr. Anderson, I want you to do me another little favor, will you?" he coaxed, and Harry assented helplessly.

Funk seemed to weigh what he held in his left hand against what he held in his right, then he passed a silver cigar-cutter to Harry. "I want you to toss that out of the window for me."

"But why? Why? I don't li-like to," gasped Harry, shaking like a leaf.

"Just an experiment," purred Funk. "Come, now; what harm can it do?" Harry held back a minute, then caught the silver trifle, threw it from him and, with something like a sob, fled from the room.

"I'll warrant we'll find that exactly

where we found the locket," said Funk cheerfully. "Let's go down."

Maxwell started to go after the agitated boy, changed his mind and followed the detectives to the spot where the locket was picked up. Rogers seemed angrily arguing; Funk, imperturbable, superior, stood with his arms folded in an attitude that suited his profile.

"I ask him what he means by such play-acting," Rogers pointed to the cigar-cutter at their feet. "S'posin' the darn thing did fall right here, what does that prove?"

"Oh, nothing much," Funk, having allowed Maxwell to see for himself where it lay, now contentedly restored his property to his pocket. "Merely that objects of the same weight thrown the same distance by the same hand—or," correcting himself, "or with the same force, will reach the same spot."

"Pretty far-fetched," grumbled Rogers. "Pret-ty far-fetched. How d'ye know the locket was pitched out o' the window at all? Someone may have hid it under those leaves. The thief that took it, or one of the servants, or—"

"Or you. Or me," smiled Funk. "Or Mr. Maxwell."

"Or *Derrick Suydam*," tolled in Maxwell's mind.

"Or Miss Anderson, here." Funk turned swiftly, beaming welcome.

Philippa's light foot had come up unheard by the others. She stood behind them, flushed and breathless with haste or with anger.

X

"I WANT to know," she challenged, looking from one to the other so that her question included them all, "what you three men have been doing to put my brother in such a state?"

The fat inspector pointed a vindictive forefinger at Funk.

"Ask him," he said, with one of his silent shaking chuckles, "ask the man of mystery."

He began tiptoeing off with an air of burlesque secrecy.

"Stop!" cried Philippa imperiously.

"I insist upon knowing what has been going on."

"Nathin'," grinned Rogers. "Jes' some o' Mr. Funk's play-acting."

And this time he got away.

"Mr. Maxwell, you will tell me what has happened," she appealed.

"The principal thing that has happened," he answered, "is that Mrs. Suydam's locket has been found." Philippa uttered an exclamation. "It was found where we are now standing, under that heap of leaves."

He pointed. Philippa's eyes still questioned him.

He went on slowly: "As to who took it, how it came there, how long it has been lying there unnoticed, we know nothing. You see," he elaborated to gain time, "gold and diamonds show no trace of exposure to the weather, and so—"

"Yes, yes!" Philippa broke in. "But how does this concern Harry? What was it that you made Harry do? Or made him say?"

"Nothing." Perhaps the easiest way was to make light of it; he wished Funk would do his own explaining. "Just one of Mr. Funk's little games—play-acting, as Rogers calls it."

"Go on. Go on."

"Well, a little scene was arranged—nothing that I attach any importance to," heavily; "just a striking bit of pantomime calculated to impress—"

"To impress my poor Harry! To frighten him out of his wits! And you, you," her voice broke under a weight of reproach that made Maxwell cringe, "who know how sensitive he is, assisted in this—this juggling with his emotions!" She paused, then vehemently: "Shall I tell you what you have made that unhappy boy fear? That you suspect him of being concerned in this terrible crime?"

"Oh, no, surely not, Miss Anderson," Funk disavowed promptly and suavely.

But Philippa was not looking at him. Her steady interrogative gaze rested on the man who had not spoken, so that he was forced to speak.

"I would not say that we suspect

Harry," Maxwell hesitated, aware that a drumhead court-martial in that sisterly heart was condemning him as a traitor. "I do not know what to think," he concluded lamely.

"You can think that he is innocent, can't you?" flashed the girl.

"I can hope he is," the young man spoke unhappily. "I want to think so." He mumbled miserably of coincidences that could doubtless be accounted for.

Philippa absolutely stamped her foot at him. The hot color rushed to her face; she opened her lips to reprove him, but they quivered piteously. She began to sob. From a small door near the library windows suddenly emerged Matilda Cotman and took her young mistress in her arms.

"Now, now, don't ye cry, Miss Philippa, lamb! Don't ye cry. Master Harry never done a thing. They shan't worrit you, pettie; it's old Cotman that'll stop them. They can't prove nothing. There, there, my dove! Old nurse'll look after ye both!"

And now Funk intervened with an air of deference that became him. Miss Anderson had misunderstood; there were matters he would like to explain to Miss Anderson if she would allow him; Miss Anderson was entitled to know what steps had been taken.

Philippa lifted her head from the woman's bony shoulder and dried her eyes. She did not respond at once, but she did not rebuff the detective. Funk was a good-looking man; Maxwell had scarcely realized this until he saw him bend that fine head of his before the girl. There was something wrong about a detective as handsome as that; a detective who was a college man, and wore uncommonly good clothes. Philippa, too, seemed to gaze at him with wonder.

"This is no place to talk," Funk murmured persuasively, "but I could tell you things that will interest you if we can go somewhere where we won't be interrupted."

"Very well," Philippa coldly consented. "Come to my sitting-room."

Filled with resentment Maxwell fol-

lowed them as far as the hall. Very slowly the two mounted the architectural staircase that was such a feature of Firtees. They paused on every step; they paused longer at the broad landing. Funk's classic profile was bent over the girl; she listened closely.

That was always the way things went in this world; the innocent bystander suffered! Things had come to a pretty pass when the man who devised the test that broke Harry's nerve was allowed to monopolize Harry's sister. And how long would it be before this professional spy would find out what Philippa was withholding? To be sure, Maxwell had intended finding it out himself. He was equal to a sour smile at his own expense.

He was in no mood to be considerate of Dr. Carson, whom he found awaiting him in the reception-room. Of the various cares he was sparing Suydam none irked him more than the daily interview with the physician. He did not like the man, and sometimes the man called twice a day. At first Maxwell attributed this assiduity to Philippa's presence in the sickroom, but he was not long discovering that the beautiful Mrs. Roner, even sick in bed, had won the susceptible Southerner. Maxwell agreed with Suydam's impatience to be rid of them both. He now inquired how soon the lady would be able to travel.

"Her exquisite sensitiveness stands in the way of her recovery," Dr. Carson told him. "She is all soul, all feeling."

"I see. You mean that something is troubling her mind," said Maxwell unkindly. "By the way, you never told me what it was she cried out the evening I first brought you upstairs. You remember, Mrs. Howard met us at the door."

"I remember Mrs. Howard's action very well." Dr. Carson spoke with emphasis.

"Don't you remember Mrs. Roner's suppressed cry?"

Dr. Carson waited several moments before he began: "I answer you, Mr. Maxwell, sir, in confidence. I speak

as—er—one gentleman to another. This is not to be told to the—er—myrmidons of the law." He pursued slowly: "Mrs. Roner's voice sounded suppressed that time—the rest came like a flash, because Miss Anderson was endeavoring to prevent her from calling."

It was a bolt from the blue. Maxwell was struck dumb.

"That is what—er—rendered her words indistinguishable." Dr. Carson concluded. The color heightened in his sallow cheek, he looked warily around and continued in a lower tone: "There is also something about our first meeting I wish to ask you. You were having difficulty in locating Mr. Suydam. Did you succeed in doing so?"

"No," shortly, with his thoughts on the doctor's revelation.

"Is it known yet," in a whisper, "where he was?"

"Of course it is known," Maxwell answered angrily. "He was in New York. He went there on Tuesday morning with the intention of returning Wednesday evening, which he did. He attended two directors' meetings and spent the night at a hotel. He was not well on Wednesday and staid in all the morning. Late in the afternoon he went to the University Club and there received my message. Are you satisfied?"

Dr. Carson persisted in whispering: "Is it positively known that he was not in this vicinity on Tuesday evening?"

"Man alive," cried Maxwell, "the detectives have traced every hour of his day. Moreover let me tell you that had they traced him to the very library yonder, it would make no difference in the opinion of any one who knows Derrick Suydam. Joseph will show you out," touching the bell. "Good afternoon."

That evening dinner was a dull meal, neither Derrick nor Philippa was present, and immediately afterwards Mrs. Howard excused herself. They were leaving to-morrow early, she said, and she had much to do upstairs, so this was good-bye as well as good night.

Oh, not; not at all a sudden departure; they had already stayed longer than their original intention, at Philippa's request; they really must get home, and the dear girl was to make them a long visit just as soon as she felt free to leave.

Mrs. Howard got herself out of the room in a flood of talk. She neglected to shake hands with any one, and she did not include Harry in her invitation to his sister. Apparently Harry did not notice this. He challenged Howard to a game of billiards and Maxwell undertook to score for them. For what seemed to him an interminable period he moodily registered and smoked and stared idly out of the window into a clear, cold, moonlit night. Presently his eye fell upon two figures, strolling up and down as if the month were August. There was no mistaking the identity of the dapper man whose white spats shone in the moonlight, and his mind misgave him as to the cloaked and scarfed feminine form. Where had they come from and how long had they been there? Not long, or he must have seen them before; yet too long, in any case.

The woman showed a spot of white. The white thing was in her hand and she lifted it to her face. She was crying! Philippa was crying! Maxwell now beheld the last few minutes of the conference. Philippa, if it was she, pressed her handkerchief to her eyes and ran indoors, while Funk, taking off his hat to her, turned away. Maxwell looked at his watch.

"Only ten o'clock," he said, "but I've had enough. I'm going to get a mouthful of fresh air before I turn in."

Some way ahead of him Mr. Funk was briskly walking down the locust avenue toward the entrance. Before Maxwell reached him he was joined by another man, burly, slouchhatted, easy to recognize even in the dark as Rogers. The two were vehemently arguing; each seeming to resent the other's presence. As Maxwell came up with them he caught a bit of dialogue.

"—telling everything to that girl!"

"I told her nothing she did not know

already. Anyhow I'm not accountable to you, Inspector."

"You are accountable to me, Mr. Funk," said Maxwell, joining them. "I should like an explanation of—of the way you are forcing yourself upon the inmates of this house."

"Why, damn it!" cried Funk, "Haven't I got to watch the inmates of this house? Didn't Mr. Suydam say I was to follow the trail wherever it led? Didn't I find the locket against the wall of this house? Mr. Maxwell, the Inspector and I disagree about some things, but we agree in investigating every soul at Firtees, servants and family. Take yourself; you didn't know where that library bell was and you had no motive, yet you've been investigated. Take Mr. and Mrs. Howard; they both knew where that bell was from former visits; it is in their favor that they haven't tried to get away—"

"They are leaving to-morrow morning," Maxwell spoke hastily.

"They are, are they?" Funk paused. "Well, we can have them followed if we wish. It may interest you to know that Mrs. Howard is one of two people who have been induced to add something to their statements before the coroner."

"And the other?" expecting to hear Carson's name.

"One of the maids who forgot to mention what she thought was merely a trifle. Mrs. Howard admits that she withheld an important fact because she wished her testimony to coincide with Miss Anderson's."

"What about Miss Anderson?" demanded Maxwell loudly, and then grew hot to hear Rogers' unctuous chuckle.

"I'll attend to that young lady later," Funk changed the subject. "The point I make it that if the privacy of Mr. Suydam's residence is intruded on, you should not object. Inspector Rogers and I agree that the guilty party must have been living at Firtees. Here's how it stands: The guilty party had some object; the guilty party knew where that library bell was. So far as we can reason it out, Mr. Suydam and Mrs.

Roner were in love with each other; either of them might have wanted Mrs. Suydam out of the way. Mr. Anderson and his sister would inherit her large fortune; either of them might have wished her out of the way. Now if Mrs. Roner didn't know where that bell was—mind, I say *if*—and if she wasn't strong enough to strike the fatal blow, that eliminates *her*. If Mr. Suydam was in New York at the time, that eliminates him."

"But—" began Maxwell, and would not go on.

The detective waited for him maliciously. "Exactly," he resumed. "There's many a 'but' twixt a hint and a hit." Pleased with his axiom he repeated it: "Twixt a hint and a hit. That is to say, there's a difference between a theory and a sure thing. Well now, so far Inspector Rogers and I think alike, but we are inclined each to suspect a different person."

"Churchy lay fem, is your mottor, ain't it, Funk?" observed Rogers obscurely.

"I've a notion that you, Mr. Maxwell, suspect still a third party. Well, that's all to the good. It means that no chance will be neglected. I don't know that I have anything more to say."

"You might say who—"

"Excuse me, Mr. Maxwell, I'm not ready to say any more. I've been pretty frank with you, and now I'd like to ask you a question. When you came running to see that diamond locket, why did you glance up at the second-story windows?"

"Because I noticed *you* did."

"Ah! And what did you see there?"

"I thought—it was a very dim impression—I imagined I saw a face move away from the window."

"Rogers and I saw the same. Was it a man or a woman?"

"I really couldn't say."

"But you got the impression it was a woman, didn't you? Rogers and I thought the same. Now, we all came upstairs quickly and we met no one. Of course she may have gone down some other way, but my notion is that

she was still in the room. You noticed the closet door a bit ajar, didn't you? A good maid like that What's-her-name—Cotman—wouldn't leave a closet door open and a bit of a gown sticking out. It looks too untidy. I believe the woman who watched from the window was watching from the closet. It was for her benefit that I made that little play with young Anderson. And she witnessed it. She's given herself away about that!" triumphantly.

"Churchy lay fem, hey?" quoted Rogers once more.

XI

So Funk said that a woman was at the bottom of the mystery. The wild notion crossed Maxwell's mind that Funk meant Philippa. Who else? Certainly not commonplace Mrs. Howard; not Hortense Roner, who had all but died also; not Matilda Cotman, who had been ill in her bed; not any of the women servants. Who else? Pshaw! the idea was too absurd, particularly in view of the friendliness between Philippa and Funk.

Of course, Funk might have an ulterior motive in establishing that friendliness. On her side, so might Philippa. Young as she was, she was no immature schoolgirl, but a creature of fire and decision. She was quite equal to determining and maintaining her own headstrong course. Also, he ruefully considered, she was quite inexperienced and romantic enough to be attracted by the city detective, with his odd good looks and his air of power and mystery.

In one respect Maxwell had the advantage of Funk. Funk might interest and haunt Philippa during the day, perhaps occupy her thoughts when absent, but he could not meet her in those early hours when she slipped away from the sickroom for a breath of fresh air. And he, Maxwell, could. So he did.

But he was not kindly received. Philippa, sitting on a bench in the leafless rose-garden with Matilda Cotman at her side, watched him approach without a word or smile of greeting. Matilda stepped briskly out to meet him,

then halted and saying crossly to Philippa, "I thought it was your other young man," she walked off.

"What does she mean?" demanded Maxwell.

"She wanted to see Mr. Funk, and she mistook you for him. Old goose!" Philippa blushed uncomfortably. "He is no more my young man than you are."

"If he is half as much as I am," declared Maxwell, "she is making no mistake." He hoped the blush was for him, but feared it was for Funk. Philippa, you must not be angry with me. I am your friend."

"No one is my friend who thinks as you do about my brother."

"I am your friend," he reiterated, "and I am his friend. Let me work with you to clear away this mystery."

Philippa moved restlessly and he pretended to think she was making room for him on her bench.

"Philippa," he said, taking his place beside her, "you are holding something back. What is it that you saw—or heard? What is it that you will not tell?"

The girl covered her face with her hands.

"Is it as serious as that?"

She did not answer.

"Tell me at least, would it relieve your brother of suspicion?"

She nodded, her face still hidden.

"And yet you will not speak out? Then you are shielding some one else. Philippa, had you not better trust me? I will keep your secret. I am no detective, bent on tracking any one down."

She showed him a white reproachful countenance. "I did trust you. I told you why Cousin Emily was unhappy. I told you why I was anxious about Harry. But now—now that you are suspicious of him, now that you are so blind!" She thrust her hand out in a repelling gesture. "No, you are no longer my friend." Her hand dropped and her head drooped and her voice fell to a hopeless tone. "Even Mrs. Howard has left me. I am thrown back

entirely upon Hortense. Oh, what shall I do alone in this house!"

Even in his sympathy with her distress, Maxwell noticed the girl now called the older woman by her Christian name. He knew that originally she had scorned Mrs. Roner's artificial graces; that first evening, for instance. He himself remembered the beauty with less disfavor on the one other occasion on which he had seen her; when she gave her testimony to the coroner, propped on her pillows, crushed and cowed, all her affections stripped from her by the tragedy in which she was involved. He had felt some pity for her then, yet he hated to think that these two had grown intimate in their days of seclusion. They had been closely thrown together. Probably the sick woman had talked freely to her devoted attendant. Hortense Roner, he felt instinctively, was the kind of woman who would unburden herself of any troublesome secret.

"What has she told you?" he asked suddenly.

"Nothing," doggedly, "nothing more than she said when she was coming out of her fainting fit."

"The words you testified to? 'Save me . . . Incoherencies?'"

"There was more," weakly. "Oh, promise me never to tell! You do?" Philippa's voice was barely audible. "There was *'Rick! Rick! how could you!'*"

Maxwell had a moment of stunned silence. Then he rallied. "But she might have had something else in her mind . . . her wandering mind. Perhaps she meant 'How could you win my heart? How could you deceive your wife? How could you break with me?' He may have been trying to break with her. We don't know their private relations. I can imagine many explanations."

Philippa shook her head. "You couldn't if you had been with her and seen her horror of him. I think she *knows*. I think she *saw*. She doesn't talk about that evening. I have tried to make her, but she will not. Her one

desire is to get away from here."

"Philippa!" A sudden light dawned on him. "That woman is throwing suspicion on him to avert it from herself. Who envied Mrs. Suydam? Who was seen in the library with the dagger in her hand shortly before the murder? Who was found there afterwards beside the body of her victim? Of course she swooned after such a horrible scene, after the extraordinary effort she must have made. I know that Dr. Carson considers it impossible, yet just such impossible things *do* happen. Those hysterical organizations can put forth brief spurts of superhuman strength. Philippa, think! Who else could have done it?"

"Singular," said Philippa, with some bitterness, "how ready you are to accuse all but one person." Wearily, patiently, like a schoolteacher explaining to a dull pupil: "Have you forgotten the marks of a strong hand upon Hortense's throat? She could not have made those herself. She could not have rung the library bell; she did not know where it was. Guests seldom did, and it happened that most of the servants were new. Not that there was any secret about the bell, only it was in an out-of-the-way place and no one ever thought of mentioning such a trifle. You see how that was, don't you?"

"I see," retorted Maxwell, her manner provoking him, "what I have tried hard not to see, that you and Harry were the only ones who knew about it at Firtrees that evening. Death had eliminated Mrs. Suydam, her maid Cotman was ill and Rick was absent."

"Oh, but he—" began Philippa precipitately, and then stopped short, clapping a hand over her too impulsive lips and eyeing him apprehensively. "Oh, go away, go away!" she cried, stamping her foot. "I wish I need never see you again! You are no friend of mine nor of Harry's nor of Cousin Emily's. You pry and ask questions and get me to betray myself. You said you were no detective. No! you have not that excuse. You are not paid to track down

any one. You do it out of sheer hatefulness!"

The flame of her anger beat down any defence he might have made. When it had whirled her breathless away, he remained for some time where she had left him, on the stone bench under the leafless briars.

So that was what she thought of him. She distrusted him; she despised him. Why not? He was inclined to despise himself. He had failed. This impulsive child had revealed nothing to his best efforts until after he had promised to keep her secret. She had not told him all she knew even now.

There was one thing he must learn at once. In a minute he was knocking at the door of Suydam's study and hardly pausing for permission to enter. Suydam, haggard and unkempt, in dressing gown and slippers, came at his call from his bedroom beyond.

"Derrick, may I open one of the drawers of your old desk?"

Derrick leaning against the door frame bowed his listless head. Certainly. The small drawer at the left is the only one that is private."

"That is the one I must see."

"Must?" Derrick raised his eyebrows. "Well, John, you shall see it if you must."

Maxwell fairly threw himself upon the small handle and pulled out the drawer. Letters; papers; a photograph or two.

"Rick!" breathlessly, "I must ask you what has become of the locket I saw here last week?"

"I have it on," answered Suydam. "I don't know what business it is of yours, old chap, but here is the locket." With faint surprise in his tone he pulled out a silken ribbon on which hung the large gold oval sparkling with diamonds. "Do you wish to examine it? Yes? It is the counterpart of Emily's. The only difference is that mine contains her portrait."

He opened it and Maxwell gazed spellbound upon such an Emily Suydam as he had never known. The proudly curved lips wore a dazzling smile; there

were roses in the cheeks; there were dimples in the roses.

Their child was two years old, Derrick told him, when that dark, radiant face was painted. Emily had had her bridal locket duplicated as a birthday gift to her husband. She had been greatly disappointed because he would not go about with such a bunch of glitter dangling from his watch chain, so for years he had always carried it in his waistcoat pocket. Recently—of late, he had kept it in the drawer of his desk.

"Recently, of late," Maxwell guessed, meant since a new influence had come into Rick's life; Hortense Roner's, perhaps. He could imagine Emily's wrath at seeing her portrait discarded. He could understand the feeling that now led Derrick to wearing it once more. Afterwards he wondered whether Philippa had seen that locket. He wished she could see how sadly Derrick gazed at it; how tenderly his fingers closed upon it. Surely she would have abandoned those black thoughts about him. Or would she again have asserted, "It is remorse?" She was wrong, he was sure she was wrong. Then once more he went over that baffling fact about the bell in the library. Three persons only could have rung it. Derrick Suydam? Certainly not. Philippa Anderson? Never! Harry Anderson? . . . He went in search of Harry.

That young man was making a solitary meal in the sunny, white-paneled breakfast-room that opened at one end into a small conservatory and at the other into a pantry, where patient Joseph tarried the leisure of an irregular household. He hailed the prospect of company with delight.

"Eating alone gives me the willies, and this is the darnedest place," he grumbled. "Here's Cousin Rick living in his study so as not to meet Mrs. Roner and wishing she'd get out. Here's Mrs. Roner keeping her room so as not to see Cousin Rick, and only anxious to leave his house. Here's Philippa, who never could bear Mrs. Roner, shutting herself in with her day

and night. Heaven only knows what those two women are up to! Sit down and have some hot waffles with me. I've just ordered them and they are great."

Maxwell took a seat and smiled in self-derision as he chose one in the conventional inquisitor's way, with his back to the light that fell full on his companion. Harry caught the smile and returned it cheerily.

Maxwell could not help remarking: "You are in better spirits than you were yesterday."

"Oh," said Harry frankly, "Funk had me locoed for a minute. That was a nasty trick he played me. Made me feel, don't you know, as if he thought I was the assassin, caught in a trap. Well, you see," busily serving himself, "it doesn't matter what he thinks. I know I didn't do it just as well as *you* know you didn't do it. Only it was horrid for a moment. Maple syrup?" "Thank you." Maxwell's slightly built edifice of doubt clattered about his ears; Harry's careless candor wore no aspect of bravado. "Have you," he asked, "any theory as to who did do it?"

"Some tramp, I suppose." Harry shrugged his shoulders. "I know they have not tracked one yet, may be they never will. But that's positively all there's left to think. You didn't and I didn't and Howard didn't."

"And Derrick didn't."

"Cousin Rick? Of course not. Some men might have in his place, but *Rick!*—It isn't in his nature. You know that if you know him at all."

"Yes," said Maxwell, absently staring past the youth's sleek, dark head at a tiny fountain that danced amid the green foliage of the conservatory. He was thinking aloud rather than speaking to his rattle-brained companion.

"Yes, I know him. I know that it isn't in his nature. Yet that library bell! No tramp would have known where it was."

"Might have stumbled upon it accidentally," Harry conjectured.

"If he did, why would he ring it?

The last thing he'd want would be to summon a servant."

"Most likely he was drunk."

Maxwell still gazed unseeing at the rise and fall of the slender jet of water. Harry's theory was simple and possible.

After the waffles had disappeared, Harry proposed the inevitable game of billiards. "There's nothing else to do," he said dolorously. "You can't move about the house without running into a detective, and you can't go outside without falling over a reporter."

They went into the billiard-room, but while Maxwell succumbed with scarcely a defense to his placid adversary's superior play, he could not keep away from the subject. What had Harry meant by saying that some men in Rick's place might have killed their wives? And Harry, with his new and astonishing sangfroid, answered and expounded and explained; his most tragic statements punctuated with: "Come, little ball, come! . . . There's a carom for you! . . . Beat that if you can!"

Cousin Emily, he said, had the temper of a fiend, though she generally controlled it; her maid could tell you tales; so could Philippa; so could Harry, himself, you bet! But poor Rick bore the brunt of it. And he was always mighty good to her. He ought to have beaten her when she flew into her tantrums. That might have stopped her before things went so far. "But Rick was awfully fond of her, temper and all. Got used to it, I suppose. Might have liked the excitement. Jealous! Exact-ing! You never saw anything like her. She was a—just a tigress if he looked at any one else. And when Mrs. Roner kept staying on and on, after her visit was over—Say, it was something fierce! Rick was a fool about women; he'd urge Mrs. Roner to stay, and Cousin Emily would shut her lips tight and say nothing. It got so at last that she never opened them to Mrs. Roner, and hardly to any one else. Mrs. Roner was frightened stiff of her hostess; but then she was dippy about her host. Cousin Emily would go off by herself

on long rides—Say, she was some rider!—tearing across country and returning exhausted, her horse all lather and her habit all mud. Then she'd send excuses for not being at dinner that evening—headache or something. Or she'd sit at the end of the table glowering . . .”

Their tête-à-tête lasted practically the whole morning, and they were alone again at luncheon. Suydam was closeted with Funk and Rogers and Philippa had definitely withdrawn the light of her countenance. Except for the frequent ringing of the telephone bell the house was silent. Harry bet those two women were cooking up some fool scheme; Maxwell surmised it was the detectives. He wearily declined any more billiards. Harry morosely dealt himself a Canfield. Suddenly a clamor broke out in the hall.

“*Was ist los?*” asked Harry. And the two bored companions sauntered out to see.

XII

ON the stairs stood Mrs. Roner, heavily veiled, clinging to the rail. A step lower, Philippa, also cloaked and hatted, supported her wavering steps. Near the front door were piled trunks and bags; outside it a motor chugged. Rogers and Funk gazed from the open door of the library. Derrick Suydam stood drawn to his full height at the foot of the stairs, blocking the women's path, his handsome head lifted so that his fair hair shone against the background of their black dresses.

“Where are you going, Philippa?” he repeated his loud demand.

“I am going with Mrs. Roner.”

“To the station?”

“No,” coldly, “I am going home with her.”

“*What!*” It was a shout.

Mrs. Roner shrank back, but Philippa steadily led her down.

“You are leaving your home to go with this—this woman? Never, Philippa. I forbid it!” The indignation that paled his face and lit his eyes was a strange thing to see in easy-going Derrick.

Philippa's eyes met his as indignantly; they were reddened with weeping, but they did not flinch. “Firtees is no longer my home, since my guardian, my dear Cousin Emily, has gone, and you have no authority over me.”

“I tell you you shall not go. *You with her!* Emily would rise from her grave to stop it.”

Philippa continued to walk downstairs as if he had not spoken.

Suydam threw open the front door. “Durand!” he called, repressing his manner into its usual quiet authority, “take the car back into the garage. It will not be wanted.”

“That is not Durand nor your car.” Philippa was trembling like a leaf, but as obstinate as ever. “I phoned to the station for a taxi and it need obey no one's orders but mine.”

She moved on towards the door. Suydam closed it sharply.

“Go into the library,” he ordered, barring her way. “We can't wrangle here. All of you go in.” His imperious gesture swept the hall free. “Harry,” he demanded as he herded in the entire group, “Did you know what your sister was planning?”

“She wouldn't listen to me,” said Harry sulkily.

“She shall listen to *me*,” and he pushed the bolt.

Philippa, mutinous, stood as erect as possible, holding her travelling bag and making it plain that this was but an interruption, not the end of their journey. She stationed herself protectively beside Mrs. Roner, who sank feebly into a chair, threw back her veil and put her hands to her face.

Suydam spoke to her first. “Hortense, I insist upon your refusing this girl's company. Will you do so?” Mrs. Roner scarcely seemed to breathe. “*Will you do so?*” he asked again, more sternly. After a moment of silence: “Is it possible that you will force me to tell why Emily's ward can't—” He broke off.

Mrs. Roner put down her quivering hands and turned her large-blue eyes on him. If she was not puzzled by his

demeanor, she had every appearance of being.

Harry spoke hesitatingly: "If you mean your—er—affair with—"

"Better not, Rick, better not," came at the same time from Maxwell.

The two detectives kept themselves in the background as if politely disassociating themselves from a family matter, yet their eyes gleamed with curiosity.

Derrick put up his hand. "I am forced to speak, John. I believe you know. *She* knows. These men are close to the truth. We must take Philippa and Harry into the secret. Philippa!" he cried harshly, "there sits the slayer of the cousin that was a mother to you. Take your arm from her neck."

Instinctively Philippa obeyed.

"On that Tuesday evening," went on Derrick hurriedly, as if not trusting himself to delay, "I came back from town. Maxwell must have found that out early; and the detectives must have known."

Three of his listeners bowed their heads. "Yes, and I saw you," breathed Philippa, leaning towards him.

"Did you? Then that was what—I almost believe you thought me guilty!"

"Guilty I was, Philippa, of breaking my wife's heart; guilty of criminal levity. Why, I confess it, this woman was to meet me that evening in the library! Instead, she met my wife." He paused and wiped his brow. "When I entered the library—I came in by the window—" Once more he paused a moment. "God! I almost trod upon Emily's body! Her dead finger pointed at that woman." His own pointed accusingly. "*She* lay unconscious in the big chair; from her hand the bloody dagger had slipped to the floor. I picked it up. At first I thought she was wounded too. I supposed some villainous tramp had attacked them both. I rang for help. And as I rang she, the murderess, roused. She began excusing herself; she began vilifying my wife. Oh, later I learned she could even stoop to robbing her victim! She said, 'Emily—Emily will kill me!'" Der-

rick's voice thickened and broke. "Then," he forced himself to go on, "I heard steps; some one was coming; some one who would ask questions. What was I to do? Accuse that woman? I couldn't. Too well I knew I was the cause of her crime. It was not for me to punish her. Or be accused myself? No, that would be revolting. It would have made Emily still more unhappy for the world to think that her husband could have— With my mind in a turmoil, I dashed through the window and fled. There, Philippa, I have told you the terrible truth. It is not for me to punish her, but neither can I let you sully yourself with her company."

It was terrible; and it was the truth. Every one present felt that.

A curious small sound was heard. Mrs. Roner, straining forward in her chair, her haggard gaze rivetted on Derrick, was vainly trying to speak.

"Rick," she croaked, "Rick! *It wasn't you?*" You thought that I— With a visible effort she got back her voice, a voice so sharp and thin that no one would have recognized it for the languid silver notes that had been part of Mrs. Roner's charm. No one would have recognized, either, the noted beauty in the stricken face she turned on Derrick. Just as he had directed his explanation entirely to Philippa, who was now clinging to his arm, so did she pour forth her feverish story solely for him. Several times she stopped, gathered strength and went on.

"Oh, I was so afraid of her! That day, the Tuesday you went in town, she never spoke to me. But her eyes were always on me . . . so strangely. I was frightened, frightened! I sat in my tower room thinking that I must be a whole day alone at Firtrees—for I was alone when you were gone. Would Emily speak to me now? What would she say to me? What would she do to me in your absence? I imagined her coming into my room, where I was far from everybody, shutting the door behind her. . . . Oh!" There was a pause, in which no one spoke. "Early

in the afternoon I crept down to the library and sat there, waiting for seven o'clock; waiting and shivering." She shivered again. "The fire had nearly gone out," she complained, "and there was a chill in the air. The rain pattered like feet upon the terrace. The fog blinded the windows so that any one could have come close enough to peer in at me before I could have known. It was very still."

It was very still in the library now, too. Each listener mentally pictured the room lonely in the darkening twilight, the dying fire, the cowering woman.

"I thought I heard every sound in the house. I was sure I heard Emily stirring in her room upstairs. 'Now,' I said, 'she will come down here, she will open the door, and she will hold me with her mad eyes, and I shall be helpless before her.' Yes, it came over me quite surely now that Emily was mad."

Derrick started, but Philippa's hand closed warningly over his. His face betrayed an agony of impatience, while the slow speaker went on dwelling upon her every sensation.

"I sat there watching the door," she resumed, "thankful there was but one door to watch. Once I heard a woman's gown trail down the stairs, step by step, step by step . . . along the hall . . . to the door . . . I could have died of terror. It passed the door; and I know that Philippa or Jane Howard had gone into the living-room. Another time steps came straight to the door; the handle turned; I caught up the big dagger with an idea of defending myself. It was only Harry Anderson. I was glad when he went away; I wanted people near me, but not with me. After he went I sat there and held the dagger tight and watched the door. Bye and bye I heard a soft shuffling sound in the hall. It came nearer and I stood up. The handle turned, the door opened, I looked for Emily's face. It wasn't there! Nothing was there! Then I saw something frightful. No!" she hid her eyes as if the frightful sight

might still be before them. "You will not believe it, no one could believe it. Emily, on her hands and knees, was crawling into the room! She lifted her head and glared up at me like an animal. Then she made one bound and I felt her fingers at my throat." A convulsive shudder shook her.

"I couldn't scream. I struggled silently. Oh, Emily sane was as strong as a man—and this was Emily insane! No use struggling; the room spun round; inky points danced before my eyes . . . spread . . . grew closer . . . blacker . . . covered everything. I felt myself falling . . . falling. . . . When I opened my eyes, Rick, you were bending over me; you had come to my help. I tried to tell you what had happened. Then . . . oh! oh! . . . under your arm I saw Emily on the floor. There was blood on her dress and her face was terrible. But yours was worse. And you held a bloody dagger in your hand, and your voice was altered. I couldn't understand what you said. And then I knew what you had done! I cried out your name and I lost consciousness again . . . perhaps," she faltered, "perhaps you had to do it to save my life, but, oh! how could you! How could you! . . . All the days and nights I lay upstairs afterwards, I kept seeing her face and yours. And I wanted never to see either again."

With the falling of the shrill, unnatural voice a breathless silence fell. Derrick and Philippa shrank from the speaker; Harry for once found nothing to say. Maxwell looked at the two detectives and the two detectives looked at each other. Funk nudged Rogers.

"Miss Anderson," Rogers coughed deferentially, "you are certain that it was Mr. Suydam you saw on Tuesday evening? Can you fix the time for us?"

"It was a quarter-past seven. I had dressed for dinner and the clock told me it lacked fifteen minutes of the time, when I glanced idly out of the window and saw him walking up under the trees."

"It was a dark, rainy evening," hinted the detective.

"True, and it is hard to see out when your electric light is on, but this was an odd time for a visitor, and I was curious enough to turn mine off so as to see better. As he came into the open near the house I could not be mistaken. I was so certain that I wouldn't go downstairs. I—I was not feeling kindly towards Mr. Suydam. I didn't want to see him. Presently, in five minutes, I should say, came the alarm. I forgot for a while that I had seen Cousin Rick, and afterwards I—I was afraid to mention it."

Rogers nodded, understanding. He turned to Harry. "Mr. Anderson, you told us you were in the library at about half-past five?"

"Somewhere around that. They serve tea at five and it had been going on for a bit."

"Can you, Mrs. Roner, remember at what time he was there?"

"No," confusedly, "but he did mention tea."

"You say that Mrs. Suydam entered a few minutes after he left?"

She moved her head in assent.

"That might bring us to six o'clock. You think that Mr. Suydam came to your rescue almost immediately, but let me tell you," the detective's tone was grave and pitying, "that at six, Mr. Suydam was in the city, just taking the train out. His movements that day have been traced to the minute. His train reached Chelmsford at six-forty-five. He walked home from the station. He could not possibly have reached Firtees before seven-fifteen, the time Miss Anderson saw him."

"Well?" vaguely.

"All was over by that time. All. Everything. Her attack, your struggle, her"—sinking his voice—"her death."

"But, then," in a puzzled way; Mrs. Roner's eyes had not left his face, she seemed trying to follow his meaning. "But, then—who killed her? Who was there?"

"Only one person, Mrs. Roner."

"Good God! You mean that I . . ."

"You must have struck instinctively with the dagger you held."

"No! no! I couldn't. She was too strong for me. And I would remember . . . I would know. . . . Besides . . . Oh, my Heavenly Father, NO!"

Without a word for her, avoiding even a glance in her direction, Derrick walked unsteadily to the window, threw it open, breathed deep the pure, outside air and staggered away.

"No! no! It was not I!" screamed Hortense Roner. "I could not. I am not strong enough. Dr. Carson said I wasn't. Oh, will nobody call the doctor? He'll tell you! He'll tell you!"

She fell from her chair, she writhed upon the floor; with each frantic denial she lifted her head and let it fall violently upon the ground. Her hat and veil were crushed, her hair loosened, a false piece detached itself and flew across the room, landing upon Harry's knees. He flinched at the zephyr-light contact as from a burn.

Maxwell and Philippa sprang simultaneously to the support of the wretched creature.

"Fetch water," the girl bade, briefly, and began loosening the woman's clothing.

Maxwell hurried down the corridor. Before him as he ran the edge of a black skirt glided. He overtook it as he turned into the great hall.

"Matilda Cotman!" he cried, conscious of no surprise at seeing her. "Run into the library and help Miss Anderson. Mrs. Roner has had a bad attack."

He caught up from the silver tray the crystal tankard and glass, mentally blessing the old-fashioned New York habit of keeping ice-water ever in reach. Then he beheld Mrs. Suydam's maid silently mounting the stairs. "Matilda!" he called sharply.

She turned and looked over the banisters at him, with quiet unconcern. Something like a smile wrinkled her elderly face. Still looking, still smiling, she kept on her noiseless way.

XIII

DR. CARSON was loud in his indignation at the brutality with which his patient had been treated. She had slowly rallied from utter prostration, he said, and now, when each ounce of strength counted and every consideration should have been extended to her, she had been drawn into an agitating discussion—oh, Miss Anderson had admitted that much—and, well, he could hardly answer for her reason. She was at this moment little better than a raving maniac. At any risk, he must get her away from Firtees.

Dr. Carson made his complaint, heatedly, to Maxwell, regardless of the presence of Inspector Rogers.

"Since Mr. Suydam obstinately secludes himself, and I, for one, am quite willing not to see him," he snorted, "I address myself to you, sir, as, in a measure, representing him."

"Go on, doctor," Maxwell spoke cheerfully, for Philippa had accompanied the physician into the room, like a faithful little guard delivering a doubtful person over to one in whom she had confidence. At least that was the way he interpreted the trusting glance she threw him. They were partners; they were working together at last.

The doctor continued: "I shall have a private ambulance and a nurse of my own selection here this afternoon, and I shall take it upon myself to remove my patient to a sanitarium. I shall be glad to be put into communication with any of her family, sah," in his emotion the physician's Southern accent awoke, "but I assume full responsibility for removing Mrs. Roner. I shall listen to no objection."

"As to that, doctor, I have neither right nor desire to object," answered Maxwell, gravely, "but I fear you will have to listen to Mr. Rogers, of the police force," with an introductory gesture toward the fat inspector.

Dr. Carson literally leaped into the air. "Do I understand you, sah, that the *police* have any control over this lady's movements?"

"Doc," interrupted Rogers, irrelevantly, "I'd like to know your opinion concerning this here crime. Oh, I know your evidence before the coroner. I know, I know. *That's* all right. I merely mean to ask, between friends, as it were, whether you haven't, in any respect, changed your mind?"

Dr. Carson's lean figure drew itself away from this familiar person with even more than his usual dignity. "No, sah."

"H'm. You still believe it impossible for a woman's hand to have struck that blow?"

"Absolutely, sah."

"Not even for a—let us say a woman who was close to a raving maniac?"

"I perceive your meaning," said the physician, angrily, "and I stake my reputation that the delicate hand of this poor, persecuted lady upstairs could never have had the muscular power."

"All right, doc. My own impression exactly, but then—"

"I will add," went on the irate physician, "what I should not have withheld from the coroner: when I first succeeded in rousing Mrs. Roner from unconsciousness, *she named the criminal.*" He paused dramatically. "Her steady outcry was, 'Oh, Rick, how could you!'"

"Just so," said Rogers, unmoved. "She said that. And what do you think?"

"I think that she witnessed the actual deed and that the brute then turned, red-handed, upon her and nearly had a second murder on his soul. I think the hand that made those bruises on her poor throat was the same that struck Mrs. Suydam down. This has been my belief from the first. Moreover, I am confident that it is shared by Miss Anderson."

Rogers stared with bovine stolidity at the excited Southerner.

"You folks sure knew a lot up in that turret sick-room of yours," he drawled. "A fat lot you knew. An' may I presume to inquire why you kep' it all from the authorities?"

"Because Mrs. Roner implored me to

be silent on any delirious words of hers. I wasn't so sure they were delirious, yet they might have been. As for Miss Anderson, I felt from the aversion which she showed to her cousin that she possessed incriminating knowledge. But, again, I was sure she would keep it secret. Just as Mrs. Roner would. Just as Mr. Maxwell would. And what charm there is about that man that every one combines to shield him I fail to comprehend." His tone spoke resentment.

"Strikes me you were combinin' some yourself, doc."

"I am no thief-catcher. I am a Southern gentleman."

"Us poor thief-catchers 'u'd have a hard time if they was many like you," Rogers soliloquized, aloud. "So you an' Miss Anderson thought 'twas Mr. Suydam."

"I did and I do," said the physician, hotly; while Philippa cried, "Oh, I hated to, but for a while I did."

"An' I guess you an' me, Mr. Maxwell, thought 'twas young Anderson."

"Oh, no," Maxwell hurried to declare; he colored when Rogers' glance of humorous comprehension took in Philippa. "No, I thought it was Mrs. Roner."

"An' Funk now has a different notion from any of us. By gum, I'd like to know what Funk is up to this minute! He's as busy as a bird-dog."

The door opened and for once, without the formality of knocking, Joseph presented himself, consternation on his countenance. "If you p-please, Mr. Rogers," he appealed, "where'll I tell them policemen to go?"

"Policemen!" Rogers jumped, but promptly recovered himself. "Oh! To be sure—er—just tell them to await further orders."

"In the hall, sir?"

"Right where they are," said Rogers, so sternly vague that Maxwell grinned. He guessed that the country chief knew no more of the presence of police than he did.

"Yes, sir." Joseph handed him a

twist of paper. "Mr. Funk says there's no answer."

Rogers, still avoiding any expression of surprise, read and passed it to Maxwell who, in his turn, read:

Conceal yourself in the library to overhear a confession. Mr. Maxwell too. FUNK.

"Know a place?" asked Rogers.

"I think so. If we can make ourselves small enough." Again Maxwell's risibles were stirred at the notion of Rogers eavesdropping in the very nook whence Philippa had eavesdropped upon him.

They passed into the library through a hall that four bluecoats seemed nearly to fill. The men saluted as Rogers walked through and he returned their salute with official imperturbability.

"There's been two confessions already," he whispered while they were squeezing themselves in between the shelves. "Who do you s'pose is confessing now?"

They heard Funk's voice saying to the police, "I will call you when I want you." The next minute he entered, leading, almost dragging the reluctant Cotman. Maxwell admired the quickness with which he guessed at their hiding-place and stationed Cotman with her back to it. With a single movement he pushed the large table in front of her and seated himself on the other side, folding his arms over it and fastening a menacing stare upon her. The woman looked and probably felt like a cornered rat.

"Now," he said, briskly, "we shall not be interrupted. This is a good time for you to tell me exactly what you saw. Exactly, mind, or else you'll do time for stealing your mistress's locket."

"I didn't steal it," sulkily. "She took it off and stamped upon it, and when she left her room I picked it up to keep for her."

"But after her death," Funk shook his finger at her, "you decided to keep it for yourself. You didn't give it back to her husband."

"I wouldn't give it to *him*," said Cotman, viciously, "but I did give it back."

"Nothing of the kind," Funk overbore her. "Don't imagine for one minute that the law will hold you returned that locket." He struck the table. "You were afraid I was finding you out, so you threw it out of the window. And then," he pounded the table again, "you hid in that closet and saw me make young Mr. Anderson imitate your action. And *then*," another blow, "you began to be worried for him, and you promised Miss Philippa that if he should be accused you could tell something that would clear him."

"And so I would have," whined Matilda Cotman, "but now every one knows 'twas Mrs. Roner."

"Nothing of the kind!" shouted Funk, again. "As usual, you were at the keyhole this morning. You heard what Mrs. Roner said and what Mr. Suydam said. Neither of them knows what really happened. But *I* know!" He sprang up as if he would jump over the table at her, and Matilda shrank from his real or assumed fury. "You saw the police in the hall, didn't you? Shall I call them in? Shall I? . . . And now," reseating himself, with a change of tone, "we'll have the story straight, if you don't want ten years. Start from your creeping out when every one thought you sick in bed and looking through your mistress's keyhole. You didn't know Margaret caught you at it. Well, what did you see?"

"I didn't see anything," Matilda turned from side to side, but she was penned in.

"You didn't see," Funk corrected himself, rapidly, "but you heard. Go on. I am growing impatient. You heard her crying," he boldly asserted. "You had often heard her before."

It was a palpable guess, but it broke down Matilda's last resistance.

"Never like this," she said, earnestly, "if this *was* my mistress. It was like a—a kind of a growl, you might say. I thought it might be a dog. My mistress had been queer of late, nobody but me knows how queer, but she'd never been one to have the dogs in her room.

There was no telling what she'd do now, though. I had to know what was making that snarl in her room. 'Twas my duty," defiantly.

"To be sure it was," soothed the detective. "So you listened."

"I listened," helplessly repeating after him, "but it stopped. Everything was still. I heard something strike the floor. I heard her stamp. She began to move again, quickly. All of a sudden she opened her door on me; it opens out, so I was behind it, flat against the wall. I could see through the crack where the hinges are. She was there, coming out. She went downstairs, like a flash. When I peeped over the rail she was in the entrance hall, down on her hands and knees. I thought she was looking for something on the ground. She crawled round the turn that way into the passage that leads to the library. I heard that snarl again. I had to find out what it was. I went into her room."

"And you found?"

"Nothing. There was no dog there. The window was open and it was very cold."

"Then you picked up the locket that she had thrown down in her rage," hazarded Funk, confidently. Matilda assented. "And you determined to see what your mistress was about."

"I had to. You don't know. She—she was very strange lately."

"I quite see. You had to," purred Funk. "So you went downstairs after her." Funk's lynx eyes were on the woman's face, quick to see a change in it and to change his phrase accordingly. "Not the same stairs, of course. Nor the elevator." He had not studied the Firtrees topography for nothing. "There is a narrow flight of steps that leads outdoors. Mrs. Suydam was so fond of her flowers she had that little stair built straight from her room to the garden."

"How did you know I used that stair?"

"Never mind how I knew. How do I know all these things? The side window of the library is not far from the foot of that stair. You could climb on

the trellis and look in." He was still feeling his way.

"Oh, I did! I did!" Cotman rocked herself back and forth.

"Take your time." Funk was indulgent now. "You saw Mrs. Suydam and Mrs. Roner struggling.

"I couldn't see clearly. There was only firelight in the room. Mrs. Suydam had hold of Mrs. Roner's throat, shaking her. Mrs. Roner, she couldn't do a thing; she just stirred her hands a little. Almost at once my mistress let go and Mrs. Roner fell into a chair. Something clinked down on the hearth and my mistress picked it up. It was the bronze dagger."

"And then?"

"My mistress held it for a minute, I think." The maid went on, automatically, at his question. "Her eyes went back and forth from it to Mrs. Roner. Mrs. Roner lay like dead. I thought she was. The fire blazed up and I saw an awful smile on my poor lady's face. And she lifted the dagger. Oh! I knew what was in her mind, and I cried out and knocked on the panes, but I couldn't stop her. She heard me; she swung round my way. And then she drove that dagger with all her strength into her heart. Oh—oh!"

Funk let her compose herself before he asked: "Then what did you do?"

"I screamed again," said Matilda, wiping her eyes. "I wonder no one heard me, and covered my face and ran. I didn't see her fall. I ran . . . ran . . . back to my own room, and locked the door, and kept still there till they called me."

"You saw your mistress stab herself?"

"Yes, sir."

"And said nothing?" No reply. "And said nothing?" Still not a word. "Why didn't you tell what you had seen?"

"Well," shuffling, "Mrs. Roner was alone in the room with her; I didn't care if people thought she did it. Serve her right. 'Twas she really brought my mistress to her death. Harried her out of her mind. Broke her heart."

"You knew that at first suspicion

turned to Mr. Suydam. Were you willing to let an innocent man suffer?"

"He was none so innocent, either," said Matilda, tightening her jaw. "Suffer! I'd wish him to suffer like he made his wife suffer. I don't say I'd have let him go to the gallows."

"I have my own opinion about that," said Funk, indifferently. He stretched himself like one whose task is accomplished. "Well, you have made a full statement now, and I have witnesses to it. Even if you try to go back on it I guess it will stand. Come on out, you two."

XIV

FOR nearly twenty-four hours Mrs. Roner had to endure the belief that her hand had taken Emily Suydam's life. "Let her endure it," said Philippa, vindictively. "She ought to pay some penalty."

It was Maxwell who told her of Matilda Cotman's confession, standing at the foot of her couch, where he loomed massively against a window. The light at his back spun a hazy aureole about his red head, and the woman on the couch fixed her hungry gaze upon him as if he were indeed a haloed messenger from Heaven. Maxwell cared not for her gratitude, but it was a satisfaction for once to do or say something creditable in Philippa's presence.

When he got her alone he said as much to her. They were then in the hall outside Mrs. Roner's room, for Dr. Carson had arrived with his private ambulance and his nurse had turned them out during the preparations for departure.

The girl at his side gave him another of those partnership looks that made his heart bound. "How about me? You know you despised me for thinking evil of Cousin Rick."

They had walked to the stair and her hand was on the rail; he laid his own lightly over it for a moment.

"And you called me a spy without even the excuse of being a professional. Meantime," he laughed, "Rogers and Funk pursued their clues all around us.

Neither of us is a very good detective, are we, darling?" The word, slipping out, caused him to blush—perhaps for his grammar. Philippa blushed, too—

but all that was soon forgotten. The evening saw them walking among Mrs. Suydam's roses and camellias—a man and a woman in a garden.



MY NEIGHBOUR

By John Cournos

MY neighbour has a lovely cottage, and a garage.

My neighbour has a motor and a dear wife; and he manages both with equal skill and affection.

My neighbour has the two sweetest children in the world—and a prize dog. I envy my neighbour. I wish that all his were mine—his cottage, his garage, his motor, his wife and his children—I am not sure about the dog.

But, somehow, I do not wish to be my neighbour.

No, not for all things in the world.



THE VIGIL

Muna Lee

HIS gaze a strained attention, he stood in the door of the mad-house.

"How are you today, Charley?" asked the doctor:

And he said, "I shall know her when she comes."



WHEN a man looks for trouble and finds it—it is adventure.



NO woman is clever if she lets you know it.



A WAY OF EXPLAINING

By Morris Gilbert

THERE was no fencing. Somehow there had not been a flirtation. Neither had there been, consciously, any sign of a great passion.

But after it happened, John Fortinstone had experienced a rare elation. It seemed as if the top of his chest rose all by itself all of a sudden, so that wonderfully cool vitalizing air came welling in and he couldn't tell whether to laugh or cry, so he did both, smiling happily as his eyes filled with tears.

Of course he had always loved her. John Fortinstone thought he understood why she had been unresponsive. He had come not to expect a response.

But then she kissed him. It was not a sudden febrile snatched kiss. It was not the bursting of a dam.

It was serene—a lovely benediction—a true caress. John Fortinstone had seen rose-petals flutter to the surface of a still pool. John Fortinstone had bowed his head in holy places when the Grail had passed among golden shadows. And now John Fortinstone knew why aspen leaves tremble when there is no wind—and he knew why ascetics smile sometimes.

And then when he was alone John Fortinstone had rather she had struck him across the mouth than kissed him like that.



SEEN ON A STREET CORNER

By Elizabeth Cary Williamson

A GIRL, in a pale blue dress, put a penny in a blind man's cup.

The man bit the penny, to see if it was real; but the girl danced blithely on, unconscious.

For her, a robin sang all day long.



A DETECTIVE story is a narrative based on the theory that all the clever people in the world are either criminals or detectives.



MARRIAGE: two persons trying to walk under one umbrella.



BUSTER

By Frank R. Adams

MARGARET BATTENBURG had lost her pet Ford, Buster. It had been missing more than once, but now it had disappeared entirely. It always stayed under the porch, nights, but one morning, when little Margaret dashed out to feed it a dish of cylinder oil for breakfast, the accustomed place was empty.

She whistled and shouted—she even rattled a quart of bolts in a tin pail to make it think its mother was calling, but there was no response.

Margaret burst into tears. As has been said, Buster was a great pet. It had been in the family for a great many years and was a faithful companion. Buster was very intelligent and knew a great many tricks. It would lie down on its side, roll over and play dead. Another astonishing feat that Buster performed was that of telling its age. Any time anyone asked how old it was Buster would bark loudly as many times as it was years old—that is, if the gasoline held out.

Margaret had found it one day on her way home from school. Someone had kicked it out into the street. The engine was old and there was a puncture in one of the rear tires so that it limped dejectedly. Margaret, who was then only six years of age, took compassion on it and led it home on a string to give it a saucer of gasoline. Quite to her surprise it stayed around. Her father, Mr. Rudolph R. Battenburg, protested and tried to drive it away, but he was not able—in fact, it seemed impossible for anyone to drive it.

And so, without being officially adopted, it became a fixture of the Battenburg home. At first it would start

out with some member of the family and be gone quite a while before it was brought home by a repair man who had found it in the street and returned it in the hope of getting a job. But as the years rolled on its trips away from home grew shorter and fewer until at last scarcely anyone ever took it out.

Then Buster got to shedding badly and Mr. Battenburg refused to let it stay in the garage any longer for fear the other cars might catch it. Wherever Buster lay down or rolled over would be found a lot of bolts and screws and such like litter. So Buster was banished from the garage. But still it hung around, sunning itself in the yard on pleasant days and seeking shelter under the porch at night and when it stormed.

But Buster made a good watch-dog. Twice robbers were frightened away by the faithful pet. In each instance the burglar stumbled over it and Buster made a noise like a washboiler full of pipe fittings falling off the roof that awakened everyone in the neighborhood, including the policeman in Monahan's back room. After that even Mr. Battenburg began to regard Buster in a new light and it is doubtful if he would have given it up even if the junk man had been willing to take it away.

So year after year they bought licenses for it and fed it the best grade of grease and oil that its declining years might be happy. With the passing of time, Margaret grew more beautiful, but her affection for Buster did not wane. At twelve she was a sweet, golden-haired child, and the sight of her standing beside the decrepit old pet was a study in contrast. A famous art-

ist painted her portrait that way, her hand on the radiator of Buster, who crouched at her feet.

But now it was gone and Margaret was heartbroken.

The theory that Buster had run away was ridiculous on the face of it. Buster could never have gone a block under its own power. Someone had taken it away by force.

Buster had been stolen!

It seemed incredible that anyone would want it, but there was no other explanation. Mr. Battenburg reported the theft to the police, but they only laughed.

Margaret would not give up, but hunted the neighborhood ceaselessly for some trace of her little dumb friend. At night she would return home discouraged and dream troubled dreams in which Buster seemed to be calling for help.

One day, while passing a low, sinister-looking building, with barred windows, she heard a familiar rattle. It was Buster. She would recognize that sound in a boiler factory. She went to one of the barred window and peered in.

There in a locked room, all by itself, was Buster. A pan of gasoline and cylinder oil on the floor indicated that Buster was not being neglected. But Buster itself seemed listless, apathetic.

She tapped softly on the window and cried, "Buster, Buster."

Buster wagged its crank feebly at the sound of its name, but it did not get up.

"Come here, Buster!" she commanded.

The poor pet made an effort and tried to do as she requested. It started to crawl toward the window, but finally gave it up and staggered and fell over on its side.

Then Margaret saw the reason.

One of its wheels was gone!

Margaret would have cried out in horror had not the door opened just then and an attendant entered with a gasoline can in one hand and an oil gun in the other.

He kicked Buster in the grease pan until it cowered back into a corner and

then, before Margaret's horrified eyes, he filled the gun with gasoline and jabbed it into the engine.

For a moment Buster struggled in agony and then as the injection began to work it staggered to its three wheels once more, with a show of old-time life.

The attendant tied a rope around its radiator and dragged it protesting from the cell.

Margaret ran crying home to her father.

By good luck he happened to be home. When she described what she had seen his suspicions were aroused. He asked her to tell him the exact location of the building where she had found Buster. When she had done this he went to the telephone and called up a man named Mr. Cyril W. Fotheringay, to whom he told the facts in the case.

"Come," said Mr. Battenburg to Margaret, after he had finished telephoning. "You must lead me to this place."

Hand-in-hand and with grim looks on their faces, Margaret and her father went back to the low, sinister-looking building where her pet was confined.

When they arrived, Mr. Battenburg went all the way around the building trying all the windows.

Every one was locked!

So they had to go in by the door!

Down a long, dim corridor they tiptoed silently. Ahead they heard, faintly, a rattling cough that could come from nowhere but Buster's muffler.

At length, at the end of the hall they came to a pair of swinging doors. These they pushed open, cautiously, and found themselves in a huge, circular room, with the floor sloping sharply downward from the wall to a pit in the center.

Ranged in seats around the room were a hundred or more young men, their eyes intent upon what was going on in the pit below.

It was easy to see.

Even though it was daylight a huge battery of electric lights was suspended over the pit, with all the rays beating down mercilessly bright on the glass-

covered white table in the middle of the pit.

Around the table grouped half a dozen men in white aprons and girls in nurses uniforms who moved deftly and swiftly about their tasks.

All interest centered on the table.

With a sinking sensation of horror, Margaret and her father looked, too.

There lay Buster strapped to the table, with its three wheels up in the air.

"Phut, phut, phut-a-phut," said Buster, faintly—oh, so faintly and pathetically!

One of the men was addressing the students, who were seated:

"You will notice, gentlemen, that while there appears to be very little life left in our subject when under the influence of ordinary gasoline injections, there is a considerable improvement when ether is substituted."

Under his direction one of the nurses shot a hypodermic of ether into Buster. Immediately the sounds grew louder and Buster struggled to get up, making a terrible, rattling sound.

"You notice the difference?" queried the lecturer. "It sounds almost like a 1907 Packard, doesn't it? While the subject is in this condition it is quite possible to remove the transmission without killing it."

With the help of one of the internes, he made a couple of incisions with a cold chisel in the transmission case. A jet of dark fluid spurted out through the holes, but the phut-phut-phuta-phut never ceased. The lecturer reached down suddenly, grabbed the transmission with both hands and lifted it, warm and squirming, from the chassis. The gears continued to revolve in his hands and the engine kept on, but they were entirely separate.

A flutter of applause from the students greeted the deft feat of their instructor.

In the same manner he removed the differential gear and each of the wheels in succession and Buster still coughed on. It was horrible and yet somehow it was wonderful, too, the way that the spark of life persisted under such unbelievable conditions.

"And now," said the instructor, with a flourish, "I shall remove the vermiform carburetor and take out the spark plugs." He put on a pair of rubber gloves. "It will undoubtedly destroy one of the finest subjects we ever had, but the struggle for life will doubtless be interesting and instructive."

"No! no!" exclaimed Margaret pitifully, unable to restrain herself longer. "You must not!"

"What's this?" demanded the operator, pausing with a gleaming monkey-wrench upraised in his hand. "There is no one here who can stop me."

"Yes, there is," spoke a new voice, that of a man.

"Who are you?"

Into the circle of light in the pit stepped a man of commanding appearance, wearing mutton-chop whiskers.

"I am Cyril W. Fotheringay, president of the S. P. C. F.!" he said, dramatically.

The lecturer leaped toward him with a cry.

"Oh, you are Cyril W. Fotheringay, are you?" he shouted. "Then take that."

He reached forth and grabbed the intruder by the whiskers. They came off in his hand.

The lecturer gazed upon that naked face and fell back, abashed and aghast.

It was Henry Ford Himself!

* * * * *

Under the direction of the master, Buster was put together once more and taken home. Doubtless many years of life still remain to the faithful pet, especially as it is so tenderly cared for by the beautiful Margaret Battenburg.



THE PUZZLE OF ABSENCE

By Jack Lawson

SOMEHOW the vagaries of absence have always puzzled me.

Here, for instance, is one whom I have loved—wanted—desired—who goes; a great relief steals over me—the possibility of not seeing her again stimulates, delicately, the desire to see; yet—the longer the absence the more calous, unquestioning, unthinking I become—and a letter, coming rudely, unexpectedly, almost noisily—jars uncomfortably the settled repose, that as far as she was concerned I had found comfortably shielding me.

Here's another. She annoys—irritates—troubles me most of the time. Her views seem infinitesimally narrow—her thought circumscribed—her ideals yet in the budding. She leaves—I find a poignant regret—something is lacking—a great absence makes

me uncomfortable; a draught blowing with no perceptible opening in the room; an uncanny presence of no presence. I miss her; the thousand and one little trivial annoyances become—smiling little whimsical gods, who mock, but mock delightfully. A letter comes; it opens a vista through which entangled array a thousand dream imps beckon and smile. She is all of them, each one of them, none of them. I find myself hungrily meditating on the possibility of amalgamating them all—tearing from each that ineffable charm or part of a charm that they possess of her. I want to see her—I want her to annoy me—I wish to peep through her narrow perspective—to dwell in her shallow mood.

The vagaries of absence puzzle me. I am nonplussed.



SONG

By Robert Loveman

NOT in far lands a gleam with snow or sun,
Do paradisial joys exultant lie;
Lo, now, about thy feet the blisses run,
Above thy brow the fond, familiar sky.

Not in the Orient or adown the west
Are peace and love and gentle mercy found;
At thy sweet hearth-stone dwell content and rest,
Thy fragrant garden all is hallowed ground.



THE INEVITABLE FLY

By Charles Belmont Davis

ONCE I spent Christmas day on an ocean liner, and with all my heart I hope that I shall never have to spend another. However, we at least had the advantage of most unseasonable weather. According to all precedent we should have been menaced by wintry gales and racked by mountainous waves. As a matter of fact, the sun shone from a cloudless, blue sky by day, and, at night, frosty, silver stars twinkled at us from a wonderful, purple canopy. With the exception of but one night this crisp, clean weather held throughout the voyage, and it was only on Christmas Eve that a storm broke loose and showed us just how kind the elements had been to us.

But, so far as I am concerned, good weather or bad weather at sea is all bad weather, and I count an ocean voyage as just so many days out of my life. On this particular trip, however, there was one passenger who made it almost worth while. Fate or a kind purser, or a dull chief-steward, put her next to me at table. Or, on second thoughts, it may have been the staff-captain at whose table we sat, although I'm quite sure that before the voyage he neither knew her nor of her. I rather imagine he must have seen her when she came on board. If such were the case I certainly do not blame him for using his prerogative in picking out his own table guests. Why he should have chosen me to make up his *particarré* I do not know, and I cannot say that I really cared so long as my seat was next to that of Violet Cartouch.

The first time I saw her was at dinner. She wore a pale blue evening dress and a few very good jewels, but

I found out later that what she wore had little or nothing to do with her particular type of beauty. After that first night I saw her in furs, and in the simplest shirtwaists, and in sweaters, and the smartest of tailor-made dresses, but, whatever she wore, I never could detect any difference in her frail, flower-like beauty. This may have been due to the clear-cut features, or the lovely pink and white coloring, or the wave of her blonde-gold hair, or the small mouth with the sensitive scarlet lips, but I think that the woman's greatest claim to beauty lay in her blue-gray eyes that were forever changing with new and unexpected lights, and with a power of expression that I had never seen in eyes before.

In a way, there was a likeness between Mrs. Cartouch and her mother, Mrs. Morgan, who was travelling with her. The resemblance lay, however, entirely in the mould of the features, and the exquisite coloring. The elder woman was as commonplace and as hard a type of the unintelligent, well-bred British matron, as it has ever been my misfortune to meet. A certain beauty she had unquestionably handed on to her daughter, but the younger woman's mental breadth as well as her physical activity, and her extraordinary charm had evidently come from another source. Mr. Morgan, for many years deceased, must have been a very remarkable man—very remarkable.

To tell of that particular voyage, at least so far as I was concerned, would be to tell of Violet Cartouch. It literally began and ended with her. The staff-captain was a bluff, kindly soul,

but more adequate, I imagine, on the bridge than as host at a dinner table, and Mrs. Morgan's only contribution to our little luncheon and dinner parties was a recital of the marconigrams she had read on the bulletin-board on her way to the dining-saloon. Therefore, as long as the voyage lasted, Mrs. Cartouch and I were not only forced to do most of the talking at meals, but of our own volition we continued to talk to each other the greater part of every morning, most of the afternoon and far into the night.

Never have I seen the triumph of perfect physical condition as it was embodied in Violet Cartouch. To tramp the deck for miles with her, to watch the play of expression and the always changing lights in her eyes, and to now and again cast a glance at the lovely, lithe figure at my side was an absolute delight. When we were not walking we had a favourite corner in a sort of palm-room on the upper deck. It was a most charming place for an intimate talk or a cup of tea or a glass of sherry before dinner—a fairly big, square room, three sides of heavy mahogany and the fourth open for a sight of the blue sky and the green, silver-crested breakers, and, besides this, the place (save for the presence of Mrs. Cartouch and myself) was usually deserted. It was in this room on the fourth night out that she told me her story. It was not a pretty story, and one which few ordinary women would tell a comparative stranger, but Mrs. Cartouch was not an ordinary woman. At the moment, under the influence of her beauty, and alone with her in the corner of the darkened palm-room, it seemed quite right, without hesitation or fear that she should lay bare her life to me. Afterwards I found two reasons, or, perhaps I should say excuses for her. One was that I had told her my own story, that is the only story that really interested me, and the other was that Mrs. Cartouch's story, or the most of it, had been whispered in every London drawing-room, and printed in every society journal that thrives on scandals

about women. After all, in her own way, she was only telling me the truth about what most people had told of her, not knowing whether it was or was not the truth, but preferring to believe that it was. She started the story with a question.

"Did you ever know an Englishman named Wolverton," she asked, "Philip Wolverton?"

I shook my head.

"I thought perhaps you might have met him," she went on. "He's been in America a good deal. He was always studying people and conditions, and he liked your big-game shooting. I went to Dakota with him once, and we had a wonderful month, living in the hills, shooting deer and bear, and we each got a mountain lion. It was great sport." For a moment she paused and crinkled her forehead. "No," she went on, "I don't think that I was ever quite as happy in all my life as I was that month."

The woman seemed to me to be too brutally frank to speak as she did and not be married to Wolverton, and so, in my innocence, I said. "Then you have been married twice?"

"No," she went on in her low, pleasant voice, and without the least expression of surprise or annoyance at my question, "No, I wasn't married to Wolverton. I should have married him, but I didn't. I'll try to make you understand, but I'm rather afraid you won't."

"I was staying with some friends in Sussex, and he came down for the shooting. I suppose I was about twenty-two then, and he fell in love with me. Any girl would have fallen in love with Wolverton. He had everything—good looks, and brains, and a wonderful way of talking to a woman. Phil was really a big man—one of the youngest liberals in the party, and people said it would only be a few years before he would make the Cabinet. He had about forty thousand a year then, too. Phil was a real catch. The night before he had to go back to town I arranged to meet him early the next

morning in the rose-garden. He told me that there was something he wanted to say to me, but that he didn't want to say it in a stuffy, crowded drawing-room. He wanted to say it in the open where we could be sure that we were quite alone, except for the birds, and where we would have the grass and the trees about us, and the flowers still heavy with the dew. That's exactly what he said, because Phil, with all his strength, was terribly sentimental, and I always remembered the words, because if he hadn't had that romantic idea of meeting me in the garden, and had proposed that night instead, he would have saved us both such a lot of trouble."

"You mean you didn't meet him?" I asked.

"No, I didn't meet him. I lay awake all that night thinking how glad I was and, then, at last, tired out from sheer happiness, I fell asleep and woke up just in time to see him driving away to the station. Rather silly and careless of me, wasn't it?"

"Rather human and amusing," I protested. "But, of course, loving you as he did, he wrote to you."

Mrs. Cartouch shrugged her shoulders and a smile crept into her unfathomable eyes.

"Yes, he wrote to me," she said. "He wrote me that he had resigned his seat and had gone on a special mission to Algiers."

"And you?" I asked.

"I? Oh, I was young and headstrong, too, so I ran away and married Ralph Cartouch, who was a blackguard if there ever was one, and a man I didn't love and never could love, but Ralph, in his way, had always loved me. I don't know why I did it, but I suppose so long as I had decided to make a mess out of my life I decided to do it thoroughly. Women always do that when they marry from pique, don't they?"

At the moment I could remember many of my friends who had married for love and made a mess of it, but not a blessed one who had married from

pique. However, I nodded my head in a cordial, courteous assent.

"And afterwards?" I asked.

The night had suddenly grown quite cold, and whether it was from the breeze that blew in at the far end of the palm-room that was open to the sea, or whether it was from the recollection of her days with Cartouch, I don't know, but I noticed that the woman shivered slightly and drew the fur coat that she wore more closely about her bared throat.

"For a month" she said, "I went through hell with him—I tell you it was hell. Is there any such prostitution as that of the woman who is supposed to be and ought to be decent and who marries one man when her whole heart is full of another? Then I went to pieces entirely, and they put me to bed, and I raved about Wolverton. I know I did because they told me all about it as soon as I was well enough for them to tell me anything. And just as soon as I could stand on my feet I started for Algiers."

"And Wolverton?" I asked.

"Of course—Wolverton. My story was out. I'd been shrieking it aloud in my delirium for days, and besides, I didn't care. All I wanted was Phil. I forgot Cartouch, who, after all, was my husband, and I forgot my mother and the pride that I suppose every woman ought to have. Position and modesty and shame no longer meant anything to me. My mind was tired, I suppose, and it had forgotten a good many people and even words. I tell you my mind was numb and my heart was numb and it only seemed to beat when I thought of Phil."

"And your husband—Cartouch?" I asked. "Did he follow you to Algiers?"

Mrs. Cartouch pulled herself out of the corner of the bench where she had been sitting and resting her elbows on the table and her chin between her palms, stared out at the patch of purple sky and the crystal stars. For the moment I know that she had forgotten my presence entirely and her mind had flown back to those first happy days

with Wolverton. Suddenly her eyes turned towards me, and, meeting mine, she smiled as if to beg my pardon for having allowed her thoughts to have strayed so far.

"Were you really as happy as that?" I asked.

But she went back to my former question. "No, Cartouch didn't follow me. I've never seen him since. He disappeared as if the earth had swallowed him up."

"Then he did love you?"

When she spoke again, the girl, for Violet Cartouch looked more like a girl than a grown woman, her voice sounded very hard and metallic—"I thought so at first. I didn't know then, but as time went on and as Wolverton's position and my position became more and more impossible I saw that Ralph's remaining in hiding was his idea of revenge. He wasn't man enough to divorce me and he was too much of a coward to come out in the open and fight. It was the revenge that only a distorted, evil brain could have conceived. I know I did wrong, but my life with Cartouch was a crime, and he knew that, and he should have set me free. Our one hope was that his lack of money would drive him from his hiding place, and that he would come to Phil with some blackmail scheme to divorce me. But his love of revenge was even too great for that."

Mrs. Cartouch seemed to suddenly become conscious that her voice was a little unsteady and high, and was fast approaching a point when it might be beyond her control, and, so, she ceased talking, and taking out her cigarette case slowly lighted a cigarette, and for a few moments blew rings of smoke at the heavy rafters of the cabin.

"Can you imagine anything more devilish?" she went on again, her voice quite calm and steady now. "Carefully hidden in some place that even his family and his lawyers didn't know of, watching us go to the devil. Knowing that both of us were too much in love with each other, and too weak to live apart, and seeing us sink lower and lower in the eyes of the world, and what

hurt more, in those of our family and the friends who really loved us. It wasn't only a case of the woman losing caste you see, because all of the time I was dragging Phil down with me. Of course we put up a bluff and pretended to be respectable, but everyone knew, and, in time, I had ruined his public career just as surely as I had ruined my own private character."

When I spoke again I spoke quite frankly because I considered Mrs. Cartouch's conversation sufficiently frank to say what I thought. "But it seems to me," I said, "that your love was pretty weak after all. You both knew that you were dragging each other down. If your love for Wolverton had been a really big love I should have thought that it would have been strong enough for you to have left him."

Mrs. Cartouch nodded at me, and vouchsafed me a superior sort of smile.

"I know what you mean," she said, "In time it even grew strong enough for that, and, believe me, it was greater strength and not any lessening in our love for each other. I left Phil, and for two years I never saw him, nor heard from him. I would never have seen him again but I heard that Ralph had died in America. It wasn't only a rumor, but I got it on what I thought was the best kind of authority—authority I had no reason to doubt. At last, I thought, that I had come in to my real happiness, for in the meantime, you see, Phil had made a fresh start, and was fast getting back his old place in public life. But, of course, the one thing he wanted to do was to marry me."

"And then?" I asked.

Mrs. Cartouch once more dropped back into the corner of the bench, and, folding her arms over her breast, looked at me with a smile that was the most mirthless smile I believe that I have ever seen on a woman's lips or in a woman's eyes.

"And then," she repeated, "and then, just about as we were to be married, and our troubles seemed to be at an end, a man that Phil and I knew very well turned up from America and told

us that he had seen Ralph a month before on a ranch in Idaho. I knew this man, as I said, very well, and I knew that he knew Ralph, and I knew that he would not have told us unless he was quite sure. So you see we were as badly off as ever. That is why I am here now. I went to Idaho to find my husband—after ten years. Think of it, after ten, long, weary years."

"I should think—" I began.

"I know what you think," she interrupted. "You think that it would have been better had Wolverton gone. But you're wrong. I could say and do to my husband what Wolverton is too fine to say or do. If Phil had found Ralph he would have offered him money to stay away forever, and Ralph probably would have taken the money and come back whenever he wanted more. I do not believe that blackmail is ever possible, and I know that I am not as fine as Wolverton. Believe me, if I had seen Ralph for only five minutes I am quite sure that he would never have bothered us again."

"And you didn't find him?" I asked, "or any trace of him?"

"None," she said. "It wasn't easy. This friend of mine had only seen him for a moment, and then, too, I suppose Ralph had changed his name. If I had seen Ralph he would have disappeared off the face of the earth forever. No one would have known how, or why, and I would have been on my way back to my wedding."

"But men," I protested, "do not disappear off the face of the earth forever, and no one know how or why. They used to, but that was in the days of dungeons and torture chambers. There are too many police about now, and too many yellow journals. I don't know what your scheme was, but whatever it was I'll bet you couldn't get away with it. You may find the ointment but the fly is inevitable."

As I spoke I watched her gloved hand almost unconsciously steal slowly under her fur coat to a point that I should judge was just below her breast. It may have been over her heart which

was perhaps beating too strongly, but I wasn't sure. Then she withdrew her hand slowly from beneath her coat and rising quickly held it out to me as a sign that it was time for her to go to bed, and that our talk was at an end.

"Good night," she said, "and be a good friend to me and forget everything that I have told you about my failure in life. Everything except that I said that even to-day men disappear from the earth forever and no one ever knows the why or wherefore. Believe me, my dear friend, that is still possible."

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I did not see Mrs. Cartouch until the next day at luncheon, and then the talk at table was all about the big tree that had been placed in the middle of the saloon and the Christmas Eve dance that was to be held that night on the forward deck. The prospect of the latter caused neither Mrs. Cartouch nor myself any particular emotion, but Mrs. Morgan was rather fond of anything that resembled a function, and, for the moment, roused herself from her usual state of apathy and she eagerly discussed the arrangements with the Captain. After luncheon was over, Mrs. Cartouch and I took our usual long walk on deck and talked of many things—almost everything except the story that she had told me the night before. But I confess that it was never very far from my thoughts. That the woman walking at my side, her girlish face free from any line or shadow, had been one of the chief actors in such a tragic scandal, seemed impossible. That is it did until one looked into her eyes, and then anything seemed possible. Several times she caught me looking at her when I thought that she least expected it, and I know that she saw the curiosity in my eyes, for I saw the warm, red blood creep slowly into her pink and white throat and cheeks. The apparent very joyousness of the woman was what surprised me most, because I knew that it must be assumed. Of all the women

and of all the men I knew, it seemed to me that this was the only one who lived but for one thought, one ideal, and now that was lost to her. Cartouch had slipped from her grasp, and it was possible that she might never hear of him again. She was still young, but the years were flying for her just as fast as they are flying for the rest of us. Faster perhaps, for frail, blonde beauty in a woman is always in danger after the owner has reached the thirty-year mark, and even if beauty is not the only asset a woman happens to own, it is always an asset in her own eyes and in the eyes of most men.

There were many things that I should have liked to have asked her that afternoon about the flying trip to America. A wonderfully good-looking woman, and a young one at that, searching for a blackguard husband through the cattle ranches of Idaho was surely a situation fraught with great possibilities of adventure. I am quite sure that in her mood of the night previous she would have told me anything that I had asked her, but she was no longer in that mood. I knew that I had only my dull-moving brain to thank for not knowing things that in all probability I would never have the opportunity to speak of again.

She came to dinner that night more radiant and more lovely than I had yet seen her. Even if the prospect of the Christmas Eve dance brought her no particular pleasure, I suppose that she wanted to look her best to do honour to our host, the Captain, and I think that we were all just a little proud of our beautiful guest. Certainly no other woman in the big saloon could compare to her whether we mere onlookers regarded her triumph from the angle of looks, or of clothes, or of jewels, or as a mere example of high spirits. I am not sure that even so far away from our homes as we were there was not a real spirit of Christmas in the air that night, or, perhaps, it was the prettily decorated room with the big, brilliantly lighted tree in the centre, or again it may have been that we were within forty-eight hours of land, but, whatever

the cause, I know that the dinner was a great success.

Passengers who had heretofore regarded each other with stolid stares, seemed to gradually thaw under the influence of the food and drink, and smiled graciously on each other and drank innumerable toasts to the long life and prosperity of any stranger whose eye they happened to catch. The speech of thanks by the American congressman and the courteous reply of the captain did not appear as mirthless and soggy as do usually such orations, and even the noisy rag-time melodies of the band were happily drowned by the talk and laughter that filled the room. Surely all promised as well as could be for the dance on deck. The captain and his officers had done their best and the appreciative passengers had arrived at that mildly convivial and friendly state when dancing seems the only logical conclusion to a well-spent evening.

But the elements, over which captains and passengers have no control whatever, suddenly decided to mar our happiness. When we went on deck we found that clear skies had given way to banks of fat, black clouds that surrounded us on every side, and the long, rolling swells that had so far helped us on our way had suddenly lashed themselves into towering, angry breakers that, with impotent fury, dashed themselves against the black walls of the swaying ship. Why the dance was not transferred to the lounge, I do not know, but it had been announced to take place on deck, and so, with true British fixity of purpose, on the deck it was held. Fortunately, the passengers from the second cabin had been invited to take part and, therefore, the forward deck, where the dance took place, was fairly crowded. But, at best, it was rather a grim occasion. The spray-shields flapped in the wintry gale; the wind whistled and souged through the rigging, and the drizzling rain and the spray formed little rivulets that trickled across the deck and made dancing a difficult not to say dangerous undertaking.

However, a few brave and thinly clad ladies and the ship's officers in their gold lace defied all the perils and, to the strains of the shivering band, did their very best to save the dance from complete fiasco. Most of the passengers sought refuge in the lounge and the companion-ways, but a few of the more hardy stood about the deck and, with chattering teeth, talked of what was going on at home, and the part they would be playing in the celebrations there had not some urgent business forced them to sea. Even although she refused all offers to dance, Mrs. Cartouch was one of the few women who persisted in remaining on deck and to, at least, add the gaiety of her presence to the dismal scene. For what seemed to me an interminable time we stood watching the heroic dancers sliding about the deck. We were both protected by the heaviest of coats, but when at last I found the sharp wind almost unbearable I suggested that if she insisted in remaining in the open, we walk down the deck to a temporary buffet where they were serving sandwiches and coffee to the frozen guests. We had almost reached the buffet when, in the dull glow of the string of electric lights that were hung about the ship, I saw the form of a man moving slowly towards us. Judging from the direction from which he came and from the fact that he was not in evening clothes I took it for granted that he was a second cabin passenger in search of the free supper.

Certainly I should not have given him another thought, but suddenly I became conscious that my companion had clasped her fingers about my arm with a grip like a steel vise, and, when I glanced down at her, I saw her staring at the approaching figure with a look of malevolence such as I had never seen even in those or any other eyes before.

"Cartouch?" I whispered, and, with her eyes still riveted on her husband, she answered me with a nod. Had she wished to avoid him, it would have been easy enough to do so, for the man was still some distance away and the wom-

an's face was almost entirely hidden behind the high collar of her fur coat. However, she passed the buffet and still clinging to my arm walked slowly on to greet him. I suppose that we did not walk for more than forty feet before we met Cartouch, but I shall always remember it as one of the longest walks of my life. She moved along the deck, with her figure held taut enough, but her face was still almost wholly concealed by the fur collar, and on account of this and the deafening roar of the sea and the whipping of the spray-shields it was almost impossible for me to hear the words that she kept repeating to herself. Just once she glanced up at me with eyes that were as hard and grey as steel and I heard her whisper, "Cartouch, Ralph Cartouch, thank God, at last!"

Whether he recognized her or not I do not know, but I think that he would have passed us had she not stepped directly before him. At the same moment she raised her head high and stared steadily into the man's weak, shifting eyes. When she spoke her voice was so different from the voice that I knew that it might have belonged to another person and to one who was speaking from a long way off.

"I'm glad to see you, Ralph," said this strange, passionless voice. "It's been a long time since we met, a long time."

The man started to say something, but hesitated for a moment while he apparently steadied his long, loose-jointed frame. Whether he did this because the boat was rolling badly at the time, or because he had been drinking, I could not tell. It was dark and I think that my own legs were shaking just a trifle in fear of a scene to which I had become a most unwilling witness. Once, quite sure of his footing, Cartouch stuck his left hand deep in his coat pocket and with the right, touched the vizer of his golf-cap. And then, and for what seemed to me to be many minutes, but I suppose was in reality but a few seconds, he stood there blinking at her as if he were trying to re-

call her face and who she was. Now that I look back on the scene I am quite sure that he must have been drinking. At last, when he apparently came to himself, his lips broke into what I suppose in another face would have been called a smile.

"You're right, Violet," he said. "It's been a long, long time." And, then, the smile turned into a grin that spread over his hard, dry, sunburned face. "Would you care to have a dance with me?" he leered. "You know, Violet, you used to be very fond of dancing with me, very."

"No, not to-night," she said, still speaking in the same even voice, "not to-night, Ralph. You see, I've been wanting to talk to you for such a long time. I even went to America for a talk with you."

Once more Cartouch's bronzed face broke into the same ugly grin. "I'm sorry I missed you," he said. "I'm just on my way to England now to see you."

Without taking her eyes from his the woman nodded her head and pressed her pretty lips into a hard, straight line. "So you came to it at last," she said, more to herself than to her husband.

Cartouch drew his hand from his pocket, and, with both hands, made a gesture that would call her attention to his suit of tweeds, which, even in the dim light, one could see were worn threadbare and very ragged.

"Yes, my dear," he laughed, "I've come to it at last."

With a curt nod she gave me my dismissal, and, taking her husband's arm, turned the long, gaunt figure about and led him slowly back along the deck in the direction from which he had come.

I returned to the buffet, where I found the few remaining guests from the dance refreshing themselves, and I must say that I never enjoyed a cup of steaming coffee more. Later I went to the smoking-room, which was crowded with the usual sets of card-players, and with little groups of men enjoying the warmth of the big room, and still wishing each other a Merry Christmas to the

accompaniment of many libations. I joined a party of men I knew at one of the tables, but I found their talk particularly dull, and my mind was always going back to the last picture I had had of Violet Cartouch and her husband walking unsteadily along the rain-swept, rolling deck. At last it seemed as if I could stand the oppressive heat and the confused babble of noise no longer, and, making some excuse to my friends, I crossed the room and went out by the door that opened onto the palm-room. The place was but dimly lighted, but in the corner, where Mrs. Cartouch and I had spent so many pleasant hours, I saw her with her husband. It was a curiously unpleasant sight. The woman had thrown back her coat, and I could see the lovely rounded throat, a great brooch of rubies glistening at the edge of her corsage, and the glint of two diamond stars that she wore in the waves of her yellow-gold hair. She was leaning on the table, her arms folded, and her eyes looking squarely into those of her husband. The lanky figure of the man was sprawled out in the corner of the bench, one hand in his coat pocket and the other on the table, his fingers tightly grasped about the stem of a wine glass. If I had not been sure that he had had too much to drink before I was quite sure of it now. He showed it in his eyes and in his sagging shoulders, and, if any further proof were needed, the two bottles of champagne on the table would have settled the matter. I was quite sure that Cartouch had no money with which to buy champagne, and why his wife should have chosen to buy it for him was a question to which, for the moment, I could find no adequate answer. They were both too much interested in their own affairs to notice me at all, but as I passed to the open deck I heard the man, in an unsteady, maudlin voice, repeat the words, "Money, that's all, money."

The rain had ceased by now, and the wind had gone down somewhat, but the night was very dark, and the giant waves, lashed into a fury by the storm,

shook the big boat mercilessly, and made her tremble from stem to stern. It was with great difficulty that I made my way along the wet decks to the entrance of the main companion-way. I glanced in at the deserted writing-room, and, then, through the closed glass-doors, at the lounge where there were still a few belated card-players, but I finished by remaining outside in the companion-way, where I was quite alone. I lighted a cigar, dropped into an arm-chair before a friendly wood fire and waited for something to happen. Exactly for what I waited I did not know, but I was quite sure that something *was* going to happen. Even had I been sleepy, which I was not, nothing would have tempted me to go to my cabin.

I suppose I had been smoking before the fire for about fifteen minutes—in any case, I know that the chimes of the ormula clock on the mantel over the hearth had just struck the hour of midnight, and I was about to wish myself a Merry Christmas when the something happened. For a moment the big ship trembled frightfully, seemingly came to a full stop, and, then, apparently gathering strength again, moved slowly on her way. When I reached the door of the companion-way I found the deck already half-filled with excited men and women, some half-dressed, and all of them in a state of mind that varied from mild hysteria to absolute frenzy. Where a few minutes before there had been almost complete darkness the scene had been suddenly transformed into one of a brilliant whiteness as the search-lights at the masthead alternately flashed their blinding rays in great circles on the panic-stricken passengers, running up and down the deck, and then far out to the storm-tossed sea. Some of the more excited of the fools shouted, "Iceberg!" while others hung over the rail looking for the sinking ship with which they believed we had collided, but one man who passed me at a leisurely gait, and who seemed much calmer than anyone on deck, remarked, in quite a normal voice: "Man

overboard, and he's got a damned bad chance."

But, of course, I knew what had happened. I not only knew that it was "man overboard," but I knew that the name of the man was Ralph Cartouch, and that from the moment that he had met his wife, an hour before, he had never had even "a damned bad chance." - Fortunately, it did not take long for the excited passengers to accept the truth, and, having discovered that their own safety was not imperilled, they raced towards the stern of the boat and peered over the rail in the hope of catching sight of a poor devil struggling for his life in a sea in which no human being could have possibly lived for a single minute.

For some reason (I could not account for it at the time or afterwards) I did not follow the crowd, but as fast as I could groped my way forward along the wet and treacherous deck. I found her, as I knew that somewhere I should find her. She was crouching in a small space between the rail and a life-boat. Her long, fur coat was open and flapping, and the wind had broken her hair loose, and had blown it against her wet face and her bared throat and neck, where it had stuck in broad, yellow strands. There was no one near us, so I dragged her from her hiding-place, and half-pulled, half-carried her along the deck until we were more or less protected by the rear of the deck-house. But even then, either from the noise of the wind whistling through the rigging, or because her mind seemed half-stunned, I remember that I had to shout into her ear, and at the top of my voice, to make her understand. It was all mad—quite mad. Fortunately she had a thin, silk scarf under her coat, and this I made her wrap about her dishevelled hair. Then, arm-in-arm, we lurched our way down the deck and joined the crowd of passengers all jammed together at the stern-rail, gazing at the storm-tossed sea for a sight of the man long since dead. The big ship was now moving in a great circle, slowly churning its way through moun-

tainous waves, and leaving in its wake a broad path of boiling, white foam.

From a word gathered here and there from the crowd, we learned that two men standing at the rail in the steerage had seen the sprawling body shoot past their own deck and drop into the seething waters far below. The ship delayed only long enough to satisfy the human element in the hearts of its passengers, and then gave up its hopeless task, and once more started on its majestic way.

When we had reached the door of the companion-way, she held out her hand to me.

"Good-night," she said.

"Good-night," I replied. "It's past twelve o'clock, and Christmas Day. A Merry Christmas to you, and a happy wedding."

"A Merry Christmas to you," she said, and then, after a moment's hesitation, she added: "You see, I was right. A man may disappear and no one ever knows the how, or the why, of it."

"No," I said, "even now you're not altogether right. The fly in the ointment is inevitable. You see I know, and I'm afraid that that is going to worry you just as long as you live."



OCTOBER DAYS

By Cora A. Matson Dolson

HERE, clinging to the wayside wall,
The wild grapes purple;
And the smell
Of burning leaves
Is as the autumn's breath.

On days like these
Old memories crowd,
Laden with childhood joys,
With love's first dream;
Pictures of home-bound wagons heaped with corn,
The driver loud halloaing to his team;
Visions of walks down lanes where sumachs burn,
Of wooded thickets where the partridge calls.

And far in the distance,
Hidden by the blue,
Yet nearer us than in the summer hours,
We feel, who scan the lines of earth and sky,
The beckoning hands.



BETWEEN THE LINES

By Pauline Thomas Drendel

THEY had quarreled bitterly, as only married people can when the wound is an old one, and their yoke has galled it sorely.

She wept in a sort of suppressed hysteria; he paced the floor and scowled and bit his lip, and hated the scene with a savage distaste. Some futile things were said, as there always are at times like that. She called him inconsiderate and brutal. He scornfully replied that she would drive a man to anything. They were very human, both of them.

At last, exhausted by their spent emotions, they crept to bed, each lying, stiff and cold with anger at the other, beyond the possibility of touch. The man was sullen, silent, hurt; the woman sobbing deep down in her throat heart-brokenly. There had been talk of separating as the only possible solution of their problem. Things had focused to a crisis.

Minutes passed. A clock out in the hall struck eleven; then the half. There was no other sound except the woman's strangled breathing.

So this was finally the end. Back over all the years gone by her memory flew, touching milestones, here and there, like a weary bird that must needs pause to rest upon some stormy flight.

The months just past had been a tempest-torn waste, chill with the desolation of love grown cold. Beyond, in the middle ground, were those two years when the clouds had gathered first, brightened sometimes with the sheen of a silver lining where light broke briefly through. Still further back—she saw it now as though it were but yesterday—the courtship and the honeymoon, sweet, sun-kissed, flower-

scented days, when they had started down life's journey hand-in-hand and heart-to-heart; unsuspecting, loving, trusting; happy in the joy of nearness; asking little, giving much; seeing only spring and summer, caring not at all for winter. Oh, those happy days! Those blessed, priceless, perfect days that she had lost!

The woman's tears rolled swift and scalding down her cheeks onto the linen underneath. That was the past. This was the present. Dear God, what would the future be?

The man beside her had not stirred. Was he, too, thinking of what had already been, and what was yet to come? Was he, too, aching, throbbing, choking with the pity of it; the self-inflicted, useless blindness that had closed their eyes to joy; sent them stumbling ever into deeper gloom, down darker ways? Was there, perhaps, the sun still shining somewhere for them if they only looked to see?

Her heart went out to him in a sudden surge of understanding tenderness. He was the lover of her youth, the husband of her womanhood, the One whom she had vowed to follow come what might. For all the laughter they had shared she would forget the sorrowing. For all the dreams she could forgive the pain. If he would only take her in his arms as he had done when they were close in spirit as they were in flesh to-night—if he would only draw her down into the deep, still haven of his breast and kiss the tears away—if he would only say that he was sorry, too—ah, then, how willingly she would throw pride and bitterness aside and meet him more than half way, pouring

out her love and hopes and fears against his heart. But that intangible something, which is the woman's instinct to be sought before she can in honor come, held her aloof. She waited, rigid, praying he would feel the voiceless longing and respond.

Upon the midnight quiet fell his even breathing, gentle and untroubled as a

tired child's. *He was asleep!* The woman turned away, at last, and watched the dawn steal slowly up into the east.

And so they were divorced, and went their separate, lonely, unrelenting paths apart.

How small a thing can change the course of destiny!



THE LIBRARIAN

By Mark Van Doren

WHEN first in that still treasure-house of books
 I saw the dread librarian come and go,
 And never deign to loosen with soft looks
 Her spell o'er us who would her secret know;
 When next, behind her frosted iron shield,
 I saw her move along the friendly halls,
 Rebuking with a single glance congealed—
 Ignoring such as stood against the walls;
 I, wondering then if king or god did hold
 Possession of her queenly heart and mind,
 Resolved to be incontinently bold,
 And ask her if she be of mortal kind.
 I did,—and lo! this answer did she fling:
 "I'm just a girl, and fit for anything!"



PROSPEROUS men delight in referring to the trials of their newsboy days;
 but who ever heard the wife of such a man tell of the time when she had
 housemaid's knee?



IT is a fortunate man who has not a kind friend to tell him exactly how much
 his automobile cost the manufacturer.



THE OLD-FASHIONED ACTRESS AND THE MODERN YOUNG MAN

By Arthur Johnson

BETSEY BUNKLE prided herself on not being a bit like an actress—a belief her lay friends confirmed so affectionately that it scarce mattered what the others thought. The day, for example, when the assistant manager ragged her on her "dissimilarity," she just gigglingly, snortingly—in the perfectly hearty way she had of drawing in her breath (perfectly ladylike, too)—accepted the accustomed praise, and didn't notice that everybody laughed at how she had carelessly failed to hear the assistant manager add: "Yes, even on the stage, dear Betsey—particularly, I may say, on the stage—I often forget what you really are!" . . . This distinction accounted, she thought, for her having such nice friends. She gratefully understood why it was she didn't appeal to the followers of matinee-idols and to the usual run of her sister-associates.

But her thinking she was not like them didn't mean that she didn't consider herself—in a dark, clever-looking, mediumly tall, decidedly young (the *Dramatic Mirror* made her out to be twenty-one, whereas she passed for twenty-eight and was really thirty) fairly slender, imaginative, intellectual sort of fashion—both distinguished and handsome. It didn't mean, either, that she didn't feel human, that she didn't have the emotions of a real artist, that she mightn't sometimes long for a wild burst of passion to engulf her. She did. While aloofly watching, in the midst of her more refined circle (it was literally as if, between shows, she occupied one of the stalls) her

fellow actors on the stage of real life, she often experienced a tinge of envy at their exploits; echoes of even their quite disreputable escapades appealed to her imagination, upset her, much the way echoes from the great world may ruffle the calm of a country spinster.

Her reactions, on the other hand, were always dignified, noble. "They're all cats—cats and Jews!" she would exclaim across Mrs. Brown's respectable luncheon table; and a sip of sherry would set her thrilling with the realization of her own fortunate, happy, safe surroundings. Or, viewing the cats and Jews through—metaphorically speaking—lorgnettes, she would perhaps murmur deeply: "Poor, poor things! They're kind, simple creatures at heart, but they know no better!" After which she would near-sightedly admire the Monets on the wall, or else ejaculate, with a rising flutter of faith in herself for knowing enough to dare say such a thing: "How exquisite, dear Mrs. Brown, are these Watteau plates! How enchanting!" Or she would discuss acting with Miss Susan Smith, Mrs. Brown's tuft-hunting pundit, and emphatically bring forth her veriest pet-theory that the one thing necessary to success was *brains—brains* and good taste; which were precisely the qualities (she would snortingly announce it) that were most difficult to find on our stage to-day. . . . Whereas, in London—

It never occurred to Betsey Bunkle that because she dyed her hair a beautiful glossy chataigne brown, and put Spruce's Best Liquid Tusk-white on

her teeth, and a thin outline of Mrs. Blatch's Cherry Red on her not too invisible gums, and because she used entirely the wrong type of color on her big, broad, ungovernable lips, *et cetera*—it never once occurred to her that for any of these reasons she might have been accidentally classed (if only by an ignorant bird's-eye-viewer) as having some associable connection, however remote, with the theater.

Accessories of the sort were as taken-for-granted in her mind as the elaborately embroidered sheets she had bought (at a sale) for the two well-bedrooms of her flat; as the Adam Boudoir Suite; as her *Place Vendôme* boots with the ooze-leather tops; as her Louis Fourteenth glass chandelier; as her Austrian Fitch furs; as her Circassian walnut piano; as her "rare old teak-wood "tabouret"; as all her paintings and drawings and prints and sculpture—done in every kind of latest French or Japanese or Russian *genre* imaginable; as her big Gainsborough-Ethelbarrymore hats. (Most of her clothes came from the same fifth floor back in Paris that was responsible for Mrs. Brown's.)

She first heard of Walton Gannet as a young man whom she would get on with owing to his highly literary and artistic tastes, and owing to his especial gift for music. He was utterly charming, Mrs. Brown had told her, and very—oh *very* rich.

"Has he *seen* me?" Miss Bunkle asked from an irresistible desire to know on just what histrionic level his tastes might show themselves to be.

"Yes. He regards you, my dear—we *all* do—as our greatest American actress!"

Betsey half sighed, half appeared unresponsive (eerily, for decency's sake), half laughed discountingly (in an "oh, does it all pay!" kind of way) so as to doubt but not dispel the actual presence of some justification for her admitted standing. "God bless him!" she then cried, with dramatic theocracy—"and do ask him to meet me soon."

They met. Indeed, before the actual beginning of this story, they saw a good deal of each other. They had got on beautifully, she thought. . . . They had played the Schubert Unfinished for four hands. She had sung him several songs by Ronaldo Hahn. She had discerned—and had told him of the observation—that he was a little like Nijinsky—particularly his left thumb. She had shown him over (almost over) her conglomerately "done" one-thousand-dollar rooms—preceding him with as much esprit as if she were concierge of the Petit-Trianon. And what sympathetic, small but meaning-so-much bits of mutual experience they had found in common! He knew the signature—the sight and sound of it—of every one of the many wall-objects that had so appealingly compelled her to purchase them, or that she had so admirably inspired some admirer into giving her. They both knew the names of shops on the Rue de la Paix. They both thought the left bank was so much more—oh, incomparably *more*!—charming than the *rive droite*. They jointly remembered at what times the best trains left Charing Cross for Dover; and exactly where Omnibus Number 13 went after it boom-boomed out of Piccadilly. They both liked Regent's Park better than Hyde Park. . . . Both of them had once happened to be—at almost the same identical moment—in Vienna. . . .

Often he would come to the theater for her and take her out to supper. Although she made a point, whenever she foresaw such occasions, of carrying her mauve fringe-waving dress—or else her black Whitby jet and lace—so as to change it (with the help of Miss Hetts, the dresser) after the performance should be over, that did not preclude her from reflecting, later on, how *much* simpler and more interesting her going out so quietly with a sober, serious gentleman like that was, compared to the possibilities which came the way of most actresses. Seated in a restaurant she would look only at him; she would not stare round, for instance,

when he told her that Irene Romaine, or the adorably pretty Miss Dicky Bird, or, better still, Mrs. Winnie Warner Bisque herself, was sitting at the next table. It was enough for her to watch his underglances in their directions, and be ready to look appropriately into his joyous eyes whenever he turned them back to her and solicited what it was she wanted to eat. And she never demeaned herself by looking at the menu; she just named some plain dish—like devilled kidneys, or venison with mushrooms, or sole *demi deuil*, or hot-house grapes, or melons (if by chance they were out of season). Moreover, they didn't drink champagne to be conspicuous; it was only because Mr. Gannet was so accustomed to it, and preferred light wine—unlike so many coarser-grained men—to whiskey.

Sometimes he would come home with her and sit until two or three in the morning, talking. The only reason she sat up so late—she explicitly explained that she didn't enjoy it—was to see her friends; it was the one time—then, when the strain and the drain of self-expression were over—that she could really relax. . . . Perchance she would catch him looking at her rather too intensely. It would set her to wondering what other actresses would do in her place; she would see horrible phantoms of European journeys taken incognito; of castles in Scotland clandestinely rented for the shooting season; of the best state apartment in every hotel being always ready for her whenever the company went on tour—of always having sun on her breakfast table, the way Madge Mayberry did. But she bravely shook off such fantastic broodings and forced herself to mutter philosophically, though silently, to her listening brain: "How tragic! How dishonest, and wrong, and awful!" Whereupon, she could look sweetly over to her handsome, tall, rather pallid guest and say: "I depend so on the love and respect of my own family. I could never be happy not doing every single thing I can to be kind to them. I'm so devoted to them—so devoted!

I should die if they weren't just as devoted to me." At which his grave face would nod unintelligibly. . . .

Mrs. Brown had hit the nail right on the head when she had gushingly told Betsey Bunkle: "You're great—yes great! But, my dear, if you'd only marry! . . . You're too good for this work; that's the trouble. Let all the others gymnastically spend themselves, if they want to. But *you*—you ought to just find a good well-to-do man, and marry him, and settle down."

II

MEANWHILE, Walton Gannet was having the time of his life. His acquaintance with Miss Bunkle had sprung up at a moment when there didn't seem to be much happening in town worthy to divert him—when the daily routine palled abnormally—when the business to which he had, after his return from Europe, so accidentally attached himself, hadn't begun very arduously to engross him. It was so jolly, he thought, to have a new person, who was so different from the run of people—"so sincere and so really intelligent, you know, so much more so than you'd expect an actress to be"—turn up. And it was a distinct relief to be taken seriously—the way Miss Bunkle took him. His especial girl friends estimated his real side too lightly. . . . But they were hopelessly lost in all the flavorless parties they went to! Shut in by conventions! . . . He did like people to be free to do amusing things—*flamer* a little now and then. In his undergraduate days and during those three years abroad, he had "lived," he thought, too much to be willing to settle down all at once on that typically American business-man's untemperamental basis. . . . Later—the time would come soon enough—he would marry and be the distinguished head of a family. But not just yet.

Much as he thought he had lived, he hadn't had any dealings with the other side of the foot-lights. He had always fancied, somehow, that he wasn't fitted

for it; that he was too sensitive, cared too much about Refinement and Culture and Real Things to enjoy such a vulgar milieu of gaiety—if gaiety there were. Then, quite without his lifting a hand, he had met Miss Betsey Bunkle at Mrs. Brown's—one of the unknown older women, outside his own set—who had been great fun, in fact the only possible person that last time he had crossed on the *Olympic*. She, Mrs. Brown, had glowingly recommended Miss Bunkle's talents in a way to make him feel that he led a regrettably narrow life not to have come across them sooner—a mistake he quite deliberately and coolly determined to make up for.

It was a new opening for him; and as the days of his first knowing Miss Bunkle developed into something which—he could calmly face the fact—was decidedly like intimacy, he wasn't going to be alarmed at all by the situation; he was going to let himself be set up to the utmost by the refreshing relationship. Daring man that he thought he was! He sniffed the stimulation of adventure—at least he sniffed the picture of himself in the midst of strange scenes; and that made him feel more alive, more vigorous, more manly, than anything that had recently happened to him.

When, one day, he discovered that Glen Barker had been desperately trying to "know Miss Bunkle better"—thought she was the "one interesting person we had round," and all that—Walton's last shred of doubt, if any existed, as to the wisdom of further pursuing the acquaintance, was removed. He was in the long-coveted position of being able to pity Glen for his lack of resources. In Glen's presence he could feel himself growing more canny, more *experimenté* looking—the while his brain nigh burst with reticences, the pressure of which he thrilled over having to endure—for the sake of his Honor, for the sake of what he owed to Her. . . . It gave him an interesting pang to be obliged (for Honesty's sake) to admit: "I have met her—yes. I found her most agree-

able. Most" . . . And, his left hand resting (palm-inward) just above and in front of his left hip-bone, he gazed powerfully down at the friend it was so absolutely necessary for him to deceive. What a satisfactory picture it was he had of himself! Why, even at the moment, he couldn't remember (or thought he couldn't) how many times and oft he had been in Miss Bunkle's society! . . . He veritably had an engagement with her for that very evening! . . .

Duly he became conscious that people—many people—were talking about it. Neyer before had he been able to be the sort to be "talked about!" How it enriched things—even Fifth Avenue, in his excitement, appeared to him at times as chic as the Champs Elysées! . . . He could see just how he looked walking towards the Knickerbocker Theater on pleasant matinee afternoons—a bunch of flowers (rather florally wrapped in green waxed paper) in one hand, his gold-headed Brigg walking-stick in the other; or, standing—very straight and tall, having a *grande-dame*-like air, well dressed (not only in the crass American sense, but according to cosmopolitan continental ideas of well-dressed men)—waiting for her on the curb while she exchanged a few patronizing business words with the leading man; or, helping her to descend as conspicuously as possible under a brilliantly lighted supper-marquise.

He was sure of having been let in for all kinds of amusing notoriety in "her circles"—her "stage" circles. It was so entertaining, when he surveyed Irene Romaine or Mrs. Winnie Warner Bisque (with those same underglances from which Betsey Bunkle had derived her own respective kind of pleasure) to realize that they would have pointed him out among themselves as being a rich-man-of-the-world friend of one of their number; it was diverting to be so affiliated to stage life. . . . And, all the while, he was so genuinely absorbed; he could talk about Brioux's play, and sex questions generally, and neuroticism in religion—and have

champagne (just as if he were in Europe), and smoke at table—all of which was principally interesting, to be sure, on account of the glamour it gave to the vision that he hoped the world—his world—would have of his habits.

And his hopes were not vain ones: three girl friends, whose ideas of him had never come up to what he thought they ought to be, began now to plot (his perceptions of it were so clear!)—nay, even to set traps—for a glimpse of him. If he cut engagements he was lured into making with them, they wrote understandingly, inviting him to come again. His stock had gone up in value beyond belief; anyone, he could see, would jump at the chance to marry him. Which facts were still more romantically brought home to his consciousness in the shape of the little tidbits of gossip somebody would be kind enough to repeat for his benefit. He was believed by his friends, not to be going to the dogs, but to be about to throw himself away on an actress—than which he could conceive of no more enviable aspect for a young man of his class to present to those he loved.

Of Miss Bunkle he continued to think tolerantly. When he was with her his idea of her was rather submerged in the agreeable light in which she made him regard himself. Sometimes he permitted it to irk him a little that she should be fated to enjoy his society so much.

Things might have gone on in this preposterous fashion a good while longer if Glen Barker hadn't one day—one morning—passed him emerging from Betsey Bunkle's flat in the neighborhood of three o'clock. That had set Glen thinking; until he had eventually dared twit Walton on his devotion. Whereupon, the masterful trained deftness with which Walton could meet such a gibe suggested to Glen's mind certain possibilities that Walton wouldn't have dreamed of deliberately suggesting, but that, once inevitably abroad, made Walton revel in Glen's sly suspicions. It exceeded his wildest hopes to see, all of a sudden, that Glen

thought he could be such a devil of a rip.

The fascination which this chance posture, taken for the benefit of Glen Barker, awakened in its perpetrator, completely changed the aspect things had for him. He began to be ashamed that the situation—his and Miss Bunkle's—could appear, were the truth known, to be so unromantically and disappointingly harmless. He wished he had not started out on such a platonic footing. He speculated on how to rearrange things into an order which would (or *almost* would) warrant Glen's suspicions—being more intrigued by that way of seeing himself in the picture! . . . Those intense glances, that had driven Miss Bunkle so unwittingly into talking of her family, were but the evidences of such speculations.

Don't misjudge this young man; it never once entered his head to weigh how *his* schemes might fit in with Miss Betsey Bunkle's; it never occurred to him to wonder if he mightn't be a cad; he just selfishly, posefully—with great clearness of head, and with remarkable competence—proceeded to do what he thought best. . . . Beware of executive ability where least you expect it!

He wrote to Miss Bunkle one night (or one *morning*) just after he had left her, having, in her company, formulated a plan—as follows:

MY DEAR MISS BUNKLE:

Will you have supper with me to-morrow night? Please don't say you can't; please say yes this once. Try to arrange things—whatever comes—so that you can. I want so much.

Then he wrote "to say something to you"; but Honor (oh, he knew how he must be honorable!) bade him cross out the words. They were too suggestive—she might be misled into thinking it meant matrimony, and he couldn't stoop to deceiving her like that. Besides it wasn't necessary. He wrote instead "to see you again so much." He looked at it a moment; he put a "very" in before the "much," and afterwards inserted a "particularly" before

"to see"—which he toned down by adding at the end "to-morrow evening."

III

BETSEY BUNKLE read the note blushing. She sent him, then, a day-letter to say she would expect him to be at the stage-door by 11:15. . . . Almost at once she wrote a letter to Mrs. Brown and told her not to be surprised if she called to see her sometime the next forenoon, as she might have some urgent occasion to do it. She also wrote to her aunt and her sisters (without pondering why) nice, tender, sentimental, loving letters, containing really nothing at all, though it put her in a flutter to write them. Through the next hours she intermittently played on her Circassian walnut piano, or sang parts of Hahn songs, or paced the floors of her flat humming and peering stealthily down out of the window.

In the late afternoon she arranged the furniture with the utmost care. She took all the Mongolian chintzes off the chairs, shook them (in the south well), and put them back. She straightened her Hiroshiges and her Holbein silver-points, and fondly rubbed the wrinkles out of the Chinese mandarin's robe which hung over the Chinese Heppelwhite sofa. She fussed through the (embroidered) linen closet. She packed her old orange velvet evening gown—the one Mary Emblem had brought over for her—to change at the theater, in sudden superstitious preference to either the mauve waving-fringe or the Whitby jet. . . . She left two lights going (rapidly calculating what they would burn up to) when she left. "How sweet and cosy I've made it look!" she thought, giving it a lingering survey over her shoulder before she pulled-to the door.

All these preliminary preparations had been made with the quivering zeal that comes from suppressed mental excitement. At the theater she found herself behaving with an unusually apt *savoir faire*. She could say just the right thing to just the right member of

the company who approached her—as it seemed—at just the right moment. She realized that she could—all of a sudden—conduct herself just as an important personage should; that she had passed the line of demarcation which divides trying to make an impression from the effortless making. . . . She might have been dosed—for any difference it would have worked in her condition—with nitro-glycerine, or other clarifying stimulant.

Right in the middle of a speech she would be suddenly aware of the electric-like connection she had with the audience; her words, her gestures, seemed to fly over to them as definitely as the speeches fly along the dotted lines from drawn figures in comic supplements. She was quite beside herself from sheer lucidity. The force of her crystaline, pellucid perceptions half frightened her. Though she was never free from the tall, distractingly handsome phantom of Walton Gannet that haunted the wings, the back drop, the very faces she had to look into—that hovered beckoningly everywhere before her—she could act as convincingly as if she were utterly unaware of its adored presence.

Afterwards, in her dressing-room, she had an abnormally keen ear for every idle word Hetts, the dresser, let fall—although she was synchronously seething with eagerness and impatience for the moment when Mr. Gannet should arrive. She beheld herself in the glass to be a bit battered, bedraggled, tired looking, but she undisconcertedly (so strong was the enthusiasm that gripped her) smiled right through these obstacles and proceeded to touch up her big bland cheeks, to cherry her lips (parted, for the glimpse of done ivories it afforded), and to arrange—with unwonted meticulousness—the least loose strand of her dyed chataigue-colored hair. Not even when his knock (more accurately described, perhaps, as a surreptitious scratching on the door) came—not even then was the high pitch of her grasp on the situation lessened.

"Yes? Mr. Gannet?" she called

telephonically, swallowing her rising pulsations: "In just a minute. Oh we *have* had such a nice performance this evening! such an—" (her volume varied according to her sartorial efforts), "such a sympathetic audience!" . . . And to Miss Hetts, in a whisper: "That eye's over nearer the ribbon, Deary. Don't be in a hurry—you'll get it!" . . . Then, aloud—to give the waiting male a suggestion of something happening during his long wait—she laughed right out, unconscious of the characteristic snort made by her subsequently indrawn rush of breath.

Still holding her galloping longings with a tight rein, she opened the door.

Walton Gannet stood leaning against the opposite wall—his fulsome top hat well down over his ears, his black and white knitted scarf emphasizing his long, stylishly (though old woman-wise) chiselled face, on which had suitably set an expression of bored tolerance for this delay in the carrying out of his wishes. . . . To her he looked all wonderful.

"Are you ready?" he articulated, in a chosen, colorless tone.

She smiled at him—suppressing her smile as soon as she saw it might be momentarily out of tune with the fatigue his unmoved demeanor seemed to indicate.

At supper she observed how untalkative he was, but she saw, too, how very, very politely he treated her—as politely (though she didn't think of it) as one might feed a pet dog, or dismiss one's automobile, or bid one's valet to go until called. To whatever she said he listened with a fixed receptivity; occasionally he asked her—displaying an exquisite knowledge of the possibilities—if she would like this thing or that, if she was enjoying the food. She was enjoying it; and her mind was too throbbing with memories and expectations to admit of enjoying much else. She saw how elegantly he took his glass up by its almost ephemeral stem . . . She ran back over the different stages of her history—as far back, that is, as

she usually permitted herself to remember.

It was remarkable, she concluded again, what she had made of herself. There she was having supper with the very most highly civilized and delightful of men, the sort she was used to describing to Mrs. Brown as of her own class (so different from Irene Romaine's riff-raff of "stage-Johnnies"); she was very intimate with this friend indeed; and on the very best basis; for all of which details—she reckoned it up with a sigh of flattered relief—only her persistent rigid regard for the Proprieties had kept her worthy. No man had ever kissed her (in so far as she remembered), nor put his arm (really) round her, nor taken any but the most superficial liberties with her dignity. She was humorously known among stage folk, as Aristocratic Betsey; she was supposed to be an unfeeling, unimaginative, emotionless prude. She had often asked herself in moments of sententious loneliness if virtue did after all pay. And here it was, at last paying. See the harvest she was reaping! The harvest she would reap when—if—Walton Gannet asked her to be his wife!

It was late. Walton Gannet helped her on with her wraps—showing in his slightest gesture that confidence in himself, that masterful poise, which she knew belonged to a real man of the world. Waiting for the cab, he said to her:

"I am going home with you, Miss Bunkle."

The way he took pains to announce it was a shade surprising. Had he always said something of this sort on the other occasions? It gave her a queer twitch around the belt—a spinal disturbance. . . . Shiveringly, but resolutely, she stepped into the cab and sat down. Mr. Gannet did the same. She would never forget the click the door made when he pulled it to.

"It's chilly," she confided to him.

Without answering her he took off his fur coat to spread over them. On account of this unselfish thoughtfulness

she would have exclaimed something had not her exclamation been smothered in wonder at the accident of his hand just resting a moment on her knee; and, before she could cease wondering, he quickly withdrew the hand, and sank back into his corner of the darkness. From that moment until the cab stopped she was encompassed by a whirl of mental prickly-heat.

Mr. Gannet helped her to alight.

"I'm going to stay here," he announced again, after he had paid the driver and was mounting the stone steps by her side.

It was a simple enough statement—uttered in a courteous and gentle voice—but it gave her another consciousness of queerness under her belt, and made her teeth chatter so that she held them together and scarce dared say anything.

While she was (with difficulty) fitting the latchkey and turning it, he stood there silently by, philosophically tranquil in his resignation. Then, after she had stepped into the hall, stood aside, and said—so nearly controlling her perturbation that he gave her just a wily glance in recognition of it—"Will you come in, Mr. Gannet?" he strode (gracefully) past her, up the stairs, and through the inner door that led to her little drawing-room.

She followed him up—had another spinal titubation to see how masculinely, how abruptly (yet how lavishly), he removed his beautiful coat and dumped it down on a corner of her poor floor. (She would, at the moment, have given anything if she had only, last spring, had the good sense to order that forty-cent pulp-marquetry surface!) She pulled her own wraps more closely together, as if from still feeling chilly—while his steady yearning eyes shifted discerningly round at her, and the corner of his mouth slightly quivered.

He shoved his hands into his pockets, and walked up and down—the way men visitors sometimes do while awaiting a hostess' approach. . . .

Perhaps he felt ill at ease on account

of having so much to say, she thought—automatically, with an actress' habitual skill for elocution—repeating to herself the last line of his letter. . . . She, too, walked silently up and down after him. But when he looked at her expectantly the third time—as a card-dealer might remind his left-hand neighbor that it was his turn—she seated herself, more regally than she knew how to do, on the Chinese Heppelwhite settee. . . .

Still he remained walking up and down; he even whistled a few bars—scarce audibly—to himself. Once he stopped, stock-still, in front of the Chinese Heppelwhite settee and gazed upon her—so close, that on turning suddenly away, his leg brushed the said piece of furniture and moved it an inch or two. . . .

She *must* say something. . . . Her mind flew rapidly over their accustomed range of topics—Débussy, art in general, Parisian boulevards, London environs, everything; but they had all been so long, oh so very long ago! Could she hit on nothing—no mutual refinements that should leaven the *malaise* of this crucial hour? Every single method she had had of being sociable in a way to absorb him seemed to have receded from her repertory! She tried to think hard—as she had often forced herself to do at the theatre in meeting the emergency of a lost cue; but it only made her, she feared, look like those pictures of hers in the rôle of Nancy Sikes, which Mr. Gannet thought so libellous. In her desperation she found herself remembering how she used to look as Little Eva, years ago, at the Harlem Opera House. . . .

"My sister Effie has gone to Michigan," she essayed boldly.

He raised his eyebrows, looked at her with a decently bowed head . . . kept walking up and down.

She sought refuge in vivaciously changing her position on the Chinese Heppelwhite settee. "I think the Dürer you gave me looks wonderful by side of the Léon Bakst, Mr. Gannet! . . .

Have you seen my new Cloisnet tea-pot?"

Still no change came over his demeanor—though perhaps the least showing of impatience did hover there.

"I think this is the very peace-fullest time in the whole day," she attempted again; "*Theure exquisite!* . . . Oh, I must light the fire!" With which she hurried skillfully—as if across the stage—towards the hearth.

He faced the fire-place—over which she had begun to stoop. He half grabbed her arm.

"You—you don't want a fire!" he remonstrated a trifle fiercely . . . She stood up in front of him, looking down at the disordered kindling. "You *don't*—do you?" he tensely put to her—inimitably imitating one dazed by his own passion.

She retreated backwards to the gilded throne-chair, and left him alone. He turned around, at right angles to the mantel-piece, and rested his left elbow upon it—gazing straight ahead of him into space (though his position commanded a good view of her Adelaide Nielsen's death-mask).

She had the presence of mind to say: "I forgot—you haven't seen my miniature by—"

"I hate it, I *loathe* it!" he broke out childishly. "I haven't seen it—I don't want to see it—I should hate it!"

She looked at him; but it would only be long afterwards that she might be able to know what appearance he made. . . . He had not shifted his position; his left elbow was still on the mantel-piece, his right arm down, hand in trousers' pocket. He presented a strange picture. He suggested—perhaps his pointed chin, and the beetle-like way his fashionable clothes hung on him, and his love of being pompous, accounted for the suggestion—he suggested some long, narrow, eighteenth-century silhouette. He contracted his mouth, and took deep, resolute breaths now and then. He tapped his right toe deliberately to express his *ennui* at having to go through with it all. (He ought to have held a riding-whip in his

right hand with which concomitantly to have slapped the leg of his breeches.) His whole pose was that of one who was—worse luck—crassly, obtrusively present; who wanted to seem perfectly used to dealing with a crisis; who wasn't going to waste any time sentimentalizing it, either, nor any words diluting it. His self-consciousness might have warranted the belief that he wished to remind himself of Don Juan, or Jean-Jacques Rousseau, or Benvenuto Cellini, or—or just any commendable villain of the plays he read in the *L'Illustration* supplements. The elegance, the well-dressedness, the tallness, the statuesqueness of any of these rôles, he portrayed adequately. How he acted the rest of the part remains to be seen. . . .

Miss Betsey Bunkle accidentally swallowed something (or perhaps nothing) which made her cough.

Mr. Walton Gannet turned his face round at her as on a pivot.

"I'm going to stay here, Miss Bunkle," he cast out in even tones.

She had the creeping sensation under her belt. . . . She dared not ask him what he had said, for she knew, and she didn't want to hear him say it again; nor, though she had no idea why he said it, could she bring herself to demand—with a sufficient show of intelligence to satisfy her pride in what he might think of her—that he state his reasons.

Her Dalmatian clock struck two; the cuckoo clock in her bedroom cuckooed twice; her Westminster chimes chimed opportunely.

With his long, set, youthful face turned towards hers, her guest murmured auspiciously: "It is getting late."

But by that time she could not think of anything. Spots, specks, rings—hundreds and millions of swelling silver-colored circles—formed themselves phantasmagorically, and floated forth in the filmy depths of her seeing. . . .

Slowly and steadily he approached. . . . He sat down on the arm of the gilded throne-chair, and put his arm

about her shoulders. She had no least intention of letting him do that so unexplainedly. But she sat there.

He put his head down on hers.

"Walton—Walton!" she began.

He did not speak, nor did he peer 'round into her face.

"Of course, Walton," she expostulated, "I have become very fond—very fond of you!"

"Don't be foolish, Miss Bunkle," he advised, pressing his shoulder against hers; "what's that got to do with it?"

"But Mr. Gan—but—Walton—"

"Don't be absurd, Miss Bunkle," he bade her again. "It's too ridiculous of you."

"Walton!" she cried out, relapsing towards him. "Oh, Walton, Walton!"

At that he arose and took her right up in his arms. . . .

How strong he was! For one blissful moment she compared it to her feelings when John Tremaine carried her upstairs in the prelude to "Sappho" that month she had acted with the Tootsbury Stock Company (which was further back than in calmer moments she permitted her recollections to wander). . . . But when she realized that Walton Gannet was proceeding to carry Miss Betsey Bunkle across the room, she let out a scream the likes of which he had never heard on any stage.

The scream reminded her of the third act of "Fifine's Career," and the third act helped her to resolve what she should do to save herself. So she screamed again, and in that way regained her feet; retreated a proper distance; proceeded to "vent forth" her "stormy indignation"—her "deep, bitter disappointment." . . . For, through some miraculous effort of intuition, it had dawned on her inner consciousness that Walton Gannet did not intend—whatever else he intended—to marry her. . . .

She continued to tell him what she thought.

In the throes of her unabating anger she interpolated whole sentences, paragraphs, even pages, which, though they might have been Fifine's once, were hers

—hers—now, to employ in depicting to him—scoundrel that he was—the lowness and commonness and vulgarity and meanness and horribleness and ungentlemanliness and infamy of which she saw—at last fortunately saw—he could be so capable! . . . At the end of her speech she remained in his company just long enough to see him smilingly pick up a book of verses from the orange-petal table, and sit down to open it under the carved alabaster lamp; after which she had the strength to withdraw to an adjoining room and lock the door. . . .

But when, a half hour later, she heard him go down the corridor, and heard the click of the latch of the main entrance (or exit), she couldn't help darting out on him. . . . He was standing in the outside hall, and turned to face her.

"Good night, Miss Bunkle," he said, serenely holding out his hand. "I'm sorry you were so needlessly disturbed." He spoke in the manner of one who felt certain that this was precisely the way to conduct such a leavetaking.

Betsey Bunkle was so nonplussed by his sang-froid that she reached out and grasped the hand he offered her.

"Good night, Miss Bunkle," he repeated. "I shall see you very soon again."

She closed the door, dumbfounded.

In her bedroom she burst, uncontrollably, into a flood of tears. She outwept Fifine in the fourth act. . . . Later on, tossing between despair and fatigue and compelling sleep, she feverishly muttered over lines from every part she had ever known—parts she hoped long since to have forgotten. . . . She heard the cab-traffic die down. She heard the milk-wagons go their rounds. . . . She heard her Dalmatian clock strike, and her cuckoo clock cuckoo, and her Westminster chimes chime, until she knew her heart would break. . . . When Mabel, the janitress, brought her breakfast, Miss Bunkle said to her severely and sharply (in the manner she had found so indispensable when "addressing inferiors")

that she was ill and wished to remain there undisturbed in bed through the rest of the day.

She wept for another half hour. . . . She got up finally, and—in an old pair of moccasins and a feather-trimmed dirty pink silk wrapper—stalked about within the walk of her heterogeneously decorated domain. . . . Sobbingly she put up the shades and did a little dusting. Absent-mindedly she changed her Lord Leighton's "The Sluggard" into the position Mr. Gannet had once said best became it. . . . About nine o'clock she couldn't resist answering the telephone.

Mrs. Brown wanted to know just when she was coming over. The familiar conventional adventureless modulations of Mrs. Brown's talk had the effect of spurring Miss Bunkle on to adopt a tone of reciprocal morning uneventfulness. She promised to get dressed immediately.

The process of so doing started those wheels of energy which were the blessed cause of her being self-supporting. The hair-spring of her optimism began to gyrate. . . . Hadn't she magnified her troubles? Hadn't she too narrow-mindedly mistaken a young man's natural impulsiveness for an insult or an assault—which word was it she wanted? What if she had rebuked him, too,—oh, how scathingly she had had the courage of her convictions! Her face grew moist with the terror of having perhaps to regret it. . . . Think how kind he had been to her! Her memory one-sidedly focused on the nice things he had done—on the valuable *objects* he had donated, the delicious morsels he had contributed. . . . People would say that Betsey Bunkle's rich friend had gone back on her. Perhaps Mrs. Brown could help avert the catastrophe. . . . "Walton, Walton!" she was at length able pityingly to murmur, as—in the final moment before leaving—she wrapped herself in a thick white veil she had already used on so many occasions to hide the ravages of late hours. She got Mabel to blow for a taxi. . . . Mrs. Brown's tact would

surely think up some means of adjusting matters. She almost smiled. . . .

Mrs. Brown greeted her warmly—patiently—and asked no questions. She casually threw out that Walton was coming to lunch with her.

"Is it so?" Miss Bunkle responded; and then the vainglory of striking Mrs. Brown's modish note drove her to add: "Walton had supper last night with me!"

Mrs. Brown—continuing to knit for the Belgians—just glanced at Miss Bunkle over the top of her needles.

Miss Bunkle sighed. "I wish" (she thought it out as she went along), "I wish you could tell—could explain to Walton—dear boy—how tired I get, how exhausting my work is, how it wears me out—makes me unsociable and cross! One does spend oneself *creating*, you know."

"Rather, my dear!" said Mrs. Brown.

"Walton—oh, I don't know just how to say it—Walton—"

"He *pursues* you!" suggested Mrs. Brown, unraveling a few stitches.

"No, it isn't that. I like him to come—I enjoy him—I don't want him to stop—"

Mrs. Brown diplomatically pulled a yard of yarn from the ball at her side—as if preparing to deal with a situation.

"Don't despair if he doesn't, dear Betsey, come for a time—we live in an age when everybody is fickle—fickle and fleeting!"

"Oh!" . . . That, despite her growing confidence in Mrs. Brown's powers of intervention, was too much for Betsey Bunkle to bear. Lack of sleep triumphed over what little self-control she had left; grief at the last completely smote her, and injured pride sent her off at a maniacal tangent. . . . All her ideas of what she should do veered like a weather-vane. She hardly heard the words she was saying—but she said—so vigorously that her characteristic snort recurred at least once in the course of it:

"Don't you believe what he says,

don't trust him; he's out of his head—he doesn't *know*! There! . . . It's a *see-cret*. I didn't *mean* to tell you! . . . He came last night and proposed to me—said he could never be happy going through life without my support—my society—my love. Said he should never get over it, Mrs. Brown, never! Ah, ah, my dear, how I pitied him! But—what is the use of pretending? It's the one thing I can't do—I haven't the least scrap of pretense in my nature.

My mind was irrevocably made up—"

"Betsey Bunkle," cried Mrs. Brown, dropping her needles, "you didn't—"

"I did. I told him I—I—I—I did not and could not love him, and that under those circumstances, argue as much as he liked, marrying him was out of the question. . . ."

And—partly, to be sure, because so moved by the power of her own eloquence—Betsey Bunkle burst into a fresh flood of weeping.



WOMEN

By Maxwell Bodenheim

I

AS a tired child romps through a swinging door,
With half-weary squeals,—so she passed through me,
Seeking others.

II

I was a high, delightful stool to her:
She clambered up me to survey the world.
And when she left I retained nothing of her
But the marks of impatient heels.

III

She made me an odd hat, which she wore
While the desire remained:
But even after she had cast me aside, she always returned
To tear off a buckle or limp string,
With which she decorated more pretentious hats.



THE ALLURE OF ALICIA

By Emeline Basler

L AURIE ELTON couldn't for the life of him understand why he wanted to eat her. He had met other girls of that "peaches and cream" complexion yet had never been visited with any such preposterous desire. It was not because of her honey-colored hair—Elton did not like girls' hair in his mouth; not because of the two rows of small white teeth, he did not particularly relish corn; and her eyes—it was her eyes he often told himself that really prevented it. When she looked at him with that wide, innocent, blue regard he could not eat her for the world.

Elton at this time was wont to consider himself something of a sad dog, past praying for, and it rather pleased him to suppose everyone else held him in that light, too. Twice the "governor" had lectured him on the subject of—Billy somebody calls it "booze," the governor spoke of it as "liqueur excesses." So Laurie had come to feel he was not exactly fit company for his sister's young friends, and practiced assiduously the fine art of side-stepping. This shying off annoyed Betty who believed her sole mission in life was to reclaim her erring brother. Likewise assiduously she practiced the fine art of deception. He was not always told when there were "doings" afoot at the house. Consequently, coming home from the polo fields one afternoon he stumbled in on a lawn party, or something of Betty's, and there was no dodging the introductions. He was dragged around the circle by the triumphant little rescuer, who, however, presented merely his stalwart frame and sporting flannels, for his real entity was not there; not until—

"Miss Alicia Preston, my brother."

He sniffed a vague whiff of fragrance, looked up and stared. Before him stood a slender slip of girl who held out a snowy hand to him in friendly comradely fashion. He took the hand an instant; again the faint deliciousness and he was pulled on to complete the ring.

From a distance he watched Alicia. She was assuredly a dainty bit of femininity. She wore a white lace frock that flared and flounced and fluttered about her slim ankles. Talking "polo" to a mouse-haired nonentity he watched her. Her keynote seemed to be youth and joy. Laughter was ever effervescing from her little round, white throat. "Bubbles," he named her to himself. Again the memory of that delectable fragrance emanating from her person teased his olfactory nerves. He wanted to go right over and devour her. She made him hungry. And he was too late for the "cats" it appeared. The lady fingers, the nabiscoes and the macaroons had all been gobbled up by this bevy of young things. Elton had no taste for those things nowadays anyhow. Alcohol spoils the appetite for sweets.

He went to her side as if drawn by a magnet. What was there about her that made his mouth water so? She was positively palatable. He hovered in her presence, mystified by the inexplicable charm of this sweet, winsome mite, tormented by a longing to crush her in his arms and—and eat her! He could express it no other way.

When the last debutante had departed he assailed Betty to pump her about Alicia. Betty hugged herself, over-

joyed with the success of her strategy, overjoyed to see her brother interested in one of her friends. Alicia was a sweet thing. It only went to prove, she told herself, just show a man something pure, innocent and good, and he is ready to fall on his knees to worship it.

"Don't she even tell fibs?" asked Laurie, amazed with all the pureness and goodness with which Betty was extolling Alicia.

"No sir-ee," vouched Betty.

"I'll ask her brother. He'll know," said Laurie with a meaning glance.

"She hasn't got a brother," said the guilty maid blushing. "Anyhow, aren't you glad you dropped in this afternoon even if I did say there was nothing going on? Didn't you have a good time?"

Without vouchsafing an answer he got up and went for a walk. He was hungry and he didn't know what he wanted. Usually he wanted a gin rickey. He didn't this time. He didn't know what he wanted, and somehow he blamed Alicia for putting him in this fastidious frame of appetite.

At length he found himself standing before a drug store. The windows were prodigiously plastered with ice cream soda signs.

"Bubbles!" he ejaculated. That was it. She made him want an ice cream soda. He stalked into the store with alacrity.

"Cherry?" suggested the druggist's clerk, helping him out.

"No-o."

"Lemon?"

"Nothing as tart as that."

"Vanilla?"

"Yes, plain vanilla."

He had one, two, three; indulging in a glorious old-time ice cream soda debauch, a thing that had not happened since he graduated from Prep School.

It was two or three weeks before he saw her again. He learned from Betty that she had gone to the seashore. Then with the latter part of June she

returned to take her place in the bridal procession of one of the season's popular belles.

A few days afterward he happened into the house just in time to hear Betty "ringing off" on the 'phone. He caught the words, "Will see you at the hotel hop, Alicia." Straightway Elton decided to put in an appearance himself at that affair.

For the second time he met her. She came gowned in the maize satin she had worn as a bridesmaid. He danced with her. He held the warm, fragrant girl in her soft, yellow satin, close to his arms. The beach sun had sprinkled one or two little cinnamon freckles on her nose. During the whole evening he could think of nothing else but the custard pies for which he had slavishly adored his Aunt Mary in his boyhood. And why did she bring this delectable viand to mind? Elton could not explain it. There was Betty in the same kind of a maize colored frock—she too had been a bridesmaid—but neither she nor any of the other girls could be associated for one moment with Aunt Mary's golden pies. These damsels were too thoroughly saturated with "heart of hyacinth" and "soul of narcissus." Ah, that was it. About Alicia there was no orchid's kiss, nor any other exotic perfume . . . just a wholesome warm fragrance that made him forget about manhattans and martinis; that recalled tasty treats of long ago. He went to bed hungrier than ever. For the greater part of the night he lay awake longing for custard pie. He awoke at noon next day and ordered it for his breakfast.

This appetite continued. Something was going a little wrong with his digestion, but he certainly was losing his craving for alcohol.

"It's Her," he told himself, "I'm in love." And he honestly believed he was turning from his perverted ways, eschewing the society of the syphon under the influence of this lovely girl. Betty and the "governor" rejoiced at the clear eyes that met theirs frankly nowadays.

"It's Her," breathed Betty, awed by the power of love.

"It's Her," said Laurie to the Adonis reflected in his shaving mirror, also awed by the power of love. And with chin faintly blue, hair sleek and shiny, immaculate in fresh linen and the newest odds and ends of haberdashery he went to call on Alicia.

He found her in the porch swing nibbling bonbons. She was wearing a simple white schoolgirly muslin. Her glorious hair was in a distracting tumble. Her milky throat and arms gleamed through meshes of lace. A most kissable dimple flashed in her left cheek as she smiled her greeting. To Laurie Elton the little white heap in the swing appeared as toothsome as one of her own bonbons. She passed him the box. He grasped her hand and kissed it. Then not daring to proceed further than that he ate bonbons.

He called again and again, and each time fell ever more hopelessly in love with this enticing little creature. Who would have thought that he, Laurie Elton, would have come to care for a bonbon type of a girl, he who had always wanted a vampire in his life to

push the blame on to when he went to the devil. But there was a delectable charm about Alicia he could not resist, and at length he proposed. He was accepted and found out what seventh heaven was like when he kissed her dimple.

Alicia's wedding gown was a dream of chiffon over white satin. All during the ceremony, Laurie as he stood beside her was haunted by the memory of the angel cake his mother used to make him for his birthday. Time and time again he had watched her put the ingredients together. It was made chiefly of sugar and whites of eggs beaten to a froth, he remembered. Yes, decidedly, Alicia in her bridal veil suggested angel cake.

When the carriage door closed on them he gathered her hungrily into his arms.

"At last, my little bride. My little bunch of sweetness. How fragrant your skin is. I—I want to eat you. What makes you so utterly delicious?"

"Perhaps it's—" began Alicia; and then it came out. "You see, I like vanilla. I use it for perfume."



A WOMAN loves to think of the men she might have married—so does her husband.



A CHORUS girl is an attractive woman with a small income and plenty of money.



SOMETIMES the only way a man can win a woman's confidence is to admit that he lied to her.



IN PERSPECTIVE

By Marguerite Buller Allan

"YOU see," he used to say to me, "when we are together I can't help making love to you. You fascinate me more than any woman I have ever met."

He had said the same thing to a dozen other women, and if they had, perhaps, protested the boldness of his advances, they had also forgiven him readily, thinking the man conquered by their charm—their personal and irresistible charm!

But while he pretended earnestness, one was conscious of the mocking note, the reservation, in all he said.

Life could not hurt him, for he was insensible to deep emotions. Joy, to him, meant simply a merry mood, and sorrow a day's ennui. Like an acrobat crossing a river on a rope, he was aware of the dangerous current beneath him, but capered unconcernedly for the admiration of his audience, his cool sense of balance keeping him aloof and secure.

Why is it that I hate him after all these years? . . . In some obscure way he has tarnished the brightness of all fine things in life—they seem to me less fine now, since at one time or another he identified himself with them in conversation.

A paltry scribbler of popular verse—and he aspired to be the virile writer,

wielding an individual and powerful pen.

A hunter of other men's wives—yet he posed always as the honest friend. He would say to the beaming husband, "Well, you are a lucky beggar! I've offered myself to your charming wife as her second husband, if she ever becomes a widow, but she made me understand very plainly that I could never hope to attract her. I've no luck." And all the time the remembrance of her recent kisses made him laugh the more gaily at the husband's complaisance.

Physically of large build, his arrogant boast of health was denied by his deadly pallor—his thin hands. Oh! those hands of his! they drooped like birds with broken necks. And he had an invalid's love of sunlight—of physical prowess.

Aspiring to eloquence, his verbs and adjectives grouped themselves persistently about the pronoun "I." He would begin by describing the beauty of some work of art, and end by reducing its greatness in the crucible of his own wit.

Thinking of him thus, I am obsessed by the sense of disillusionment that mere memory-contact which his personality gives me.

Is that the reason why I weep as I slowly tear his letters into tiny fragments, that disappear like pitiful snowflakes in the hot flame of the fire?



BACHELORS and married women are always good friends. They respect and esteem one another. Both have succeeded in life.



CONSCIENCE: the inner voice which warns us that someone may be looking.

THE FAMILY FEUD

By Robert Carlton Brown

THE feud had lasted sixty years. It was a vendetta of far more intensity than the average, for the Switkys and the Schlosses were temperamental, artistic folk, living in Greenwich Village, that small section of New York where the advanced minority lives, busily thinking up new things to spring on the majority, who grow fat and stupid in the exclusive business of contemplating their great virtues.

The Switkys and the Schlosses had been neighbors in the old country, and had emigrated to New York in the same ship. They had settled in the then smug and respectable residence district, Greenwich Village. Russell Sage occupied a rented house in their street. Their surroundings were gilt-edged. But the two families didn't fit in. They juggled about, square pegs in round holes.

Both family heads prospered in business, fighting shoulder to shoulder in the struggle for existence and supporting each other socially in the evenings, over long pipes and tall cornucopias of pale, gaseous beer. Outside of business these elders of the two houses talked art and anarchy. In time it became evident that the Switkys were the more turbulent politically and the Schlosses the more ardent artistically.

Then one night, in the early fifties, Father Switky and Father Schloss fell out over the world-old question of whether in war the sacrifice of human life is worse than the destruction of works of art. Switky insisted that blood was of more value than paint and Schloss dramatically declaimed that all the blood in the world was not worth one drop of inspired red ochre.

That was the rock on which they split. A purely theoretical point. There was no war on at the time and the question hadn't the least possible practical bearing, but it was enough to upset the rhythmical vibrations of their temperaments.

After that each family head drank his beer alone in moody silence and developed opposition. Their wives did not speak as they met on the street and the children stuck out their tongues and made noses at each other.

The feud was on.

The children of both families, attending the same public school, were simultaneously jerked out. The Schlosses sent theirs to an ethical culture institution and the Switkys turned theirs over to an anarchist, who allowed the young idea to shoot all over the place.

For twenty years neither family produced a genius, but the Schlosses turned out some pretty sickly-looking, long-haired magazine illustrators and the Switkys loosed a batch of healthy long-haired anarchists on New York. One of the latter was suspected of having sent a bomb to the late Pierpont Morgan, concealed in a grapefruit, and a Schloss, by way of retaliation, immediately painted a wild post-impressionistic picture, the most rabidly radical work of art of the day.

The bad blood grew on both sides. The families exchanged shots almost daily over a period of ten years. The new head of the Switky tribe lectured on Tolstoy in Cooper Union and the leader of the Schlosses took a pot shot at his rival by defending Whistler, who was then being scoffed at, in a series of lectures at the Art Students' League.

Each family claimed supremacy as the pioneer of radical thought in America. When a turbulent Switky girl publicly married a bartender to get one on the Schlosses, the Schlosses fired back by nominating one of their sons to live with an affinity in open defiance of public opinion and the late Anthony Comstock.

After that Manuel Switky adopted the costume of Christ and walked through the streets, an advocate of simplicity and individualism. In retaliation the Schloss family rented a secluded hut in the pine woods and spent the summer back to back with nature, the whole tribe going half naked and catching colds in the head, throat, stomach, tonsils and chest.

The question of women's rights came along just in time to save the Switkys from being outgeneraled by their rivals. Mrs. Switky threw herself into the movement with an abandon which made Mrs. Schloss put on her clothes and return from the pine woods to civilization to launch forth as leader of an antivivisection campaign.

During the first years of the backward twentieth century, one of the Schlosses was mortally wounded in a debate with a Switky on free love. The Schlosses swore vengeance again and published a pamphlet on the limitation of offspring, for which one of their number was sentenced to fourteen years in Sing Sing.

The Schlosses' ranks were thinning; they began to lose heart. In experimenting with and espousing all the new radical movements, they hadn't had time to engage very copiously in the perpetuation of their species. Their ranks were depleted and they came to put all faith in young Hymen Schloss, a promising youth who was expected to take up the gnarled cudgels of the family and fight the Switkys to a finish. He was born absolutely without a conscience or a sense of morality. At the age of sixteen he was already a blasphemer and a pornographer. He didn't believe in God, nor in reason, nor in any of the other bunk of by-gone days. He was

perfect, a natural child, the Schlosses' masterpiece, and much was expected of him.

The Switkys, realizing more shrewdly that the coming age was to be woman's, had put their faith in a daughter of theirs of about the same age as Hymen. Agg is what they named her, because the name suggested a cave-woman. Agg talked freely about free love with her little playmates, told them that mothers, living in easy luxury, were no better than prostitutes, and lisped out a little argument proving conclusively that Martin Luther was a paranoic. Her language was no better than the Rev. Dr. Billy Sunday's, and she had something of his hysterical manner that went a long way toward making converts for the devil, her ideal of what a human being should be.

At the age of thirteen Hymen Schloss published a pamphlet advocating the killing of unfit babies and the Switkys answered with a series of broadsides from their little Agg, defending cannibalism, slavery, and the late Dr. Harvey H. Crippen. Before she was ten years old Agg had danced Salomé in public and made a hit. As for Hymen, his artistic activities had found expression in cubism and it was a hard blow to the Switkys when he gave a one-man show and was heralded by the art critics of the *New York Evening Telegram* as the Matisse of America.

The Switkys replied by putting Agg to work in a dress-shield factory, where she became an I. W. W. agitator and publicly practiced sabotage until she was fired and went on a lecture tour.

It was on this tour that the inevitable happened. Hymen Schloss and Agg Switky, the two most magnificently advanced souls of their time, met for the first time. Schloss was touring the country in a corduroy suit, lecturing on self-expression, monogamy, Mormonism, the single tax, futurism and vegetarianism, with an occasional dash of Nietzsche.

It was in Arkansas they came together, in a rummy little dollar-a-day railroad hotel. They espied each other

in the lobby as the landlord was passing out keys and candles to his guests at bedtime. Both were tired from travel, but their souls chimed instantly. They had heard much of each other, but their families had kept them apart. They were instantly and fatally attracted.

They went to their rooms. Five minutes later each stole noiselessly out into the corridor, Hymen looking for Agg's room, and Agg peering at the brass figures on all the doors, trying to find Hymen's.

They bumped into each other on the stairway to the third floor.

"Oh, you cave woman!" exclaimed Hymen.

"My God! It's the kid with the hyena's eyes!" cried Agg, throwing her arms around Hymen's neck.

"To think that the cosmos could contain two such souls and keep them apart so long!" breathed Hymen, gently but firmly bending in Agg's ribs.

"Psycho-analytically speaking," returned Agg, when she had got her breath, "our souls are in rhythmic coordination. Oh, Zarathustra, kiss me again!"

Her words were like strained honey dripping into Hymen's ears.

"I got your number the second I saw you," he said. "I sensed you were my soulmate."

Breaking from his embrace, Agg drew a piece of chalk from her vanity box and wrote the following impromptu on the wall:

We are sitting
On the edge of the
Cosmos
Arms entwined.
Dabbling our feet
(Fair to look upon!)
In the rainbow mist of
An unknown astral plane

"I'm a cat and you're my little mouse," said Hymen affectionately.

The affair thus auspiciously begun continued at white heat for months. Recklessly Hymen and Agg canceled lecture dates and sent frantic wires to managers to fix things so that they could work the same towns together.

Their respective families noticed this change of dates and the Switkys were sure that Hymen was following Agg's route to queer her lecture, while the Schlosses were certain that that little cat of an Agg was getting booked for the same towns and nights to put the kibosh on their Hymen. The family feud stretched to the breaking point as a result and one of the Switkys back in New York City wrote a letter to the newspapers about one of the Schlosses, calling him a *Schaffskopf* and proving that his new theory that every woman should have forty-two husbands was a violation of the Revised Statutes of the United States.

The warring families wrote long letters to their promising young representatives in the lecture field, telling them how low down their respective antagonists were to double up on platform dates. But Hymen and Agg just laughed at the letters and threw them in the same waste-basket, for it chanced that on the morning after their meeting it had occurred to Hymen, in a reflective mood, to ask Agg her name.

"Why, I'm Agg Switky," she exclaimed. "What cognomen did your thoughtless parents inflict on you, old top?"

"They called me Hymen—"

"There's a laugh in that!" exploded Agg.

"Rather reactionary, wasn't it?" smiled Hymen. "You see, father and mother weren't married."

"You're not Hymen Schloss, by any chance?" queried Agg.

"Surest thing you know."

"And I am the little world-beater of the cerebral Switkys," screeched Agg. "Isn't it a scream that we should fall for each other like a couple of avalanches, and be so eugenically fitted, too!"

"Great stuff. I'm 99 per cent masculine and you're 99 per cent feminine. Our vibrations are absolute!"

And so they laughed off the family feud. But the bitter struggle continued among the warring clans in the old home town of New York.

When Hymen and Agg got back from their tour they found it difficult to keep the secret, so they just called in the reporters and gave the story to the world.

When Mama Switky read it she fainted and when Father Switky found her with the open paper in her hand he rushed right over to Father Schloss and shook his fist in his face. In terrifying, blood-thirsty tones, he cried: "Low-life! blood-sucker? You've got a lot of a nerve to have such a son of a gun of a son!"

Father Schloss shook his fist in reply: "Robber! You've got a father-complex. Blame my son, not me."

In reply Mr. Switky cried: "You've got a damn-liar-complex. It's not Hymen's fault. What else could he do, with such a name, but fall in love? Think of the prenatal influence."

"Oh, you've got a prenatal-influence-complex!" Schloss shouted back.

Friends parted them by clapping hands tightly over their mouths and stuffing cotton in their ears. The duel was a draw, each of them having the last word, which was "complex."

For a month, then, as a result, the feud raged furiously. Hymen and Agg were despised and persecuted by their respective clans.

"Instead of bringing them together we seem to have poured kerosene on the flames," said Hymen.

"It's a shame, Hymen," replied Agg, in a serious mood. "In the last sixty years there's been altogether too much silly word-shed in our families. We must do something to put an end to the feud before some fiery Switky has a brainstorm and slaps a Schloss."

"Yes. We must do something. But what?"

"We must defy the world together. Do some great radical thing that will show our families that both of us have the stuff and that together the Switkys and the Schlosses can do the most radical thing imaginable in the world of advanced thought. Only together. Something monumental that will stand out like a gleaming light in the history of human progress."

"But what can it be? I can't think of anything we could do together better than I could do it alone," said Hymen in a spirit which might seem egotistical if the fact that he was an emancipated Nietzschean were not taken into consideration.

"Same here," said Agg. "An individual can do a big thing, but for two people! What is there to do?"

"I give it up. But we must do something amazing, something that will shock all Greenwich Village by its bold, unhampered self-expression."

So they thought upon it for a week while the family feud flared and flamed and sizzled through the newspapers, the Liberal Club, the Ferrer School and such-like super-social centers.

At last Agg got it.

"It's stupid to be free-lovers," she announced to Hymen. "Everybody in Greenwich Village has taken thirty-three degrees in that. We set the pace. I was looking up in the family records. There hasn't been a single Switky or a single Schloss in forty-seven years that's actually got married. They've fallen into the Greenwich Village rut. They've become narrow, conservative standpatter. It's up to us to give them a jolt. We'll do something big and really radical that will amaze them."

"What?" asked Hymen breathlessly.

"Get married!" cried Agg, touching a match to the fuse of the final bomb in the family feud.

"And live together, too?"

"Yes."

"My God! That is a new idea! The Schlosses and the Switkys will die of amazement. It will end the family feud." Hymen jumped from his chair at the sheer novelty of the suggestion and now walked back and forth, exclaiming jerkily, "Most original! Just the thing! Shockingly decadent!"

So they purchased a marriage license and were regularly married in the little church around the corner. Before leaving on their honeymoon to Niagara Falls they telephoned for the reporters, and the next day on reading

the papers Mr. Switky nearly went wild with joy. He waved the paper about his head and rushed to the telephone, shouting, "They've done something wonderful! The two families united at last in one great original movement for

monogamy!" He got Schloss on the 'phone and Schloss' voice was jubilant. Next evening there was a reunion dinner at which eighty-odd grinning Switkys and Schlosses shook hands for the first time in sixty years.



MY MOTHER

By Cora A. Maston Dolson

My mother is like a lily,
A tall white lily,
When she is ready
For the night.

Her hair shines
Like stamens of the lily;
In two long braids
She plaits it
With her slim fingers
As in white
She stands
In the light
Of the dresser lamp.

From my bed
Through the doorway
I watch her.
Soon she will come
And lean down
To kiss me good night.

When I am grown
And have another home
And have children,
I wonder if I
Will seem
To them
As a beautiful white flower.



A CHURCH is a place in which gentlemen who have never been to Heaven talk about it to persons who will never get there.

THE MYSTERIOUS PACKAGE

By Harold Hersey

SHE came through Chinatown regularly, a pretty, winsome girl. There wasn't much said. The old and young among the men simply sat in their doorways and smoked, or passed her on the street with only a blink of recognition in their dull eyes. She was employed by a firm in the upper part of town to sell trinkets to them. For years she had been handling the work with success, always laughing at her friends when they tried to warn her of the danger.

One night as she came rather late along the byways of an older section of Chinatown she stepped under the lintel of an ancient doorway into a dimly lighted room where Lee Yung sat smoking a long, slender pipe. He was warming his hands over a tiny fire and got up rather clumsily to greet her.

"You come late," he mumbled, putting the stem of the dirty pipe back into his mouth and blowing a thin stream of smoke into the air.

"I'm often detained," she answered, "I stopped by to give you this." He took a bundle from her hands with a slight start as she said this, disappear-

ing through a doorway at the rear. She stood waiting for him, looking idly here and there at the strange appearance of the room. She was particularly struck with a weird idol whose eyes gleamed at her from a dark corner.

Then behind her appeared the lean, yellow face of Lee Yung. He stepped softly through the curtains hanging around the doorway. She had moved to the other side of the room and was examining a beautiful piece of jade and did not hear the cat-like steps of the Chinaman. Suddenly he said, "Here, Miss Blendt, your package."

She swung around frightened. "Oh, it's you. . . . I was a trifle startled at first."

She took the mysterious-looking bundle, however, and went out into the night. The street was as quiet as a graveyard. Anything might have happened to her and the world have never known. As she turned the corner she glanced back and saw Lee Yung standing in the doorway placidly smoking. Over his head hung a sign.

It was black with gold lettering and read, "Lee Yung, Laundry."



WHENEVER a husband and wife begin to discuss their marriage they are giving evidence at an inquest.



A MAN is as old as he feels; a woman is about fifteen years older than she looks.



THE PERFECT LOVE STORY

By Marvin Dana

MRS. CARSTON smiled very gently and happily as she sat busy with her sewing. In the warmth of the cloudless summer afternoon, the shaded porch with its screen of clambering vines was a charming place. The broad floor was paneled with rugs; wide, deep wicker chairs were scattered here and there; a languid perfume of flowers floated in from the garden that lay beside. Mrs. Carston smiled again, and more tenderly, as the rippling laughter of three children at play on the lawn came to her ears, and she peered out through the vines to watch the frolic. The smile remained, to deepen a little when at last her fond gaze turned to the baby, sitting on the floor of the porch just within reach, who crowed lustily from amid a litter of toys.

Presently, a new clamor sounded from the children on the lawn, a clamor shrill with delight. It aroused Mrs. Carston from the pleasant reverie into which she had fallen. Again, she looked out through the vines, and the same tender smile bent her lips once more, for she saw her husband at the entrance to the grounds. Her eyes rested steadfastly upon him, while he paused to return the loving welcome of the children. As he mounted the steps a minute later, he was greeted by the radiance of her smile, which his own answered with equal eagerness. The kiss exchanged between the two had nought of the perfunctorily marital: the caress symbolized vital love.

A moment was given to the baby, who opened his mouth to breathe forth a hissing sound, significant of exceeding happiness, while he wrinkled

his fat face until only two rows of lashes showed where the blue eyes had been. Finally, the master of the house seated himself in one of the easiest of the chairs, rather sprawlily, and lighted a cigar in that abandonment to luxury permitted in such intimacy of the home, since the vines hid him from passers-by. For a little now, the husband and wife sat in silence, the woman busy with her sewing, the man lazily delighting in this languorous peace after the stress of affairs.

Mrs. Carston pushed her needle to repose in the fabric, and dropped the uncompleted task into her lap. With an elbow on the arm of her chair, she supported her chin on the palm of the hand, and stared with musing eyes at the flickering light that shone through the interstices of the vines. Again, she smiled tenderly, and now there was something subtly quizzical in the curving of her red lips. A suggestion of the same quality, too, was in the music of her voice when at last she spoke, turning the clear gray of her eyes on the contented face of her husband.

"John," she said simply, "why has no one ever written our love-story? There is no end to the twists and whimsies devised by the writers of romance. The ingenious schemes by which lovers are made to win through all troubles to bliss are myriad on myriad. Yet, the most wonderful love-story, the most romantic, the most splendid—ours!—has never been told. . . . Why?"

Carston, astonished, took the cigar from his mouth, and twisted about until he could regard his wife squarely. Deep affection and deeper love warmed his look as he studied the fair counte-

nance of the woman; but, as well, there was an obvious bewilderment, at which she laughed aloud. The baby crowed joyously in response. The man also smiled, though his gaze of inquiry continued. Then, suddenly, a gleam of understanding shone in his eyes. He sat erect, and moved his chair so that he was facing the woman. His kindly, resolute expression grew tender; his voice was gentle as he spoke, yet vibrant with profound conviction.

"Laura," he exclaimed, "you're right! Why hasn't our story been written? Yes, surely, it is more wonderful, more beautiful than any I have ever read."

"Oh," his wife cried, "those others—they're so jumbled, so topsy-turvy, so agitated, so up and down, so cluttered with trivialities, so—well, so foolish!"

Carston nodded vigorously.

"Exactly!" he agreed. "And ours has been so clean, so intense, so wise—and beautiful, and sacred!"

"Do you remember—?" the wife began, after a long pause.

"I remember," the man answered confidently, as if she had made the whole question clear to him by the three words. "When I first saw you, you stood looking down at the sea. And all the power and glory of the sea seemed essenced in you there on the verge of the cliff. Yes, I loved you in that moment, as I have loved you for every moment since; as I shall love you for all time."

"For that, I envy you," the woman complained, pouting. "I didn't see you then. It was not until next day that my heart leaped to the knowledge of you, dear. So, I envy you, John, since you have known love for a day longer than have I. . . . With love, as with God, a day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as a day."

The husband laughed happily.

"I lost no time," he boasted. "I was half-mad till I found someone to introduce me to you. I had fancied myself in love half-a-dozen times before. . . . But the difference!"

"And I, too—oh, I had had my affairs!" The wife tossed her head a bit

coquettishly over the memory of suitors who had waited humbly on her smiles. "But with you, at the very outset I knew!"

"My father suggested to me that it had been wiser on my part to fall in love with someone with a tidy fortune," the man reminded her.

"And my people mourned over the fact that I should be willing to marry a poverty-stricken young lawyer," the wife retorted.

Both laughed contentedly over the parental discomfiture.

"But," the husband added, moved to a filial sense of justice, "my family didn't really make any serious objection—certainly not enough for the plot of a story."

"Nor did mine," the wife admitted. "And we got married just as soon as ever we pleased. Nobody interfered with us."

"It was quick work," the man declared complacently. "I was in something of a hurry, I confess. As for you, well, I have a secret suspicion that you were—oh, sympathetic."

The woman's color deepened daintily in her cheeks; there was a hint of confusion in her tones as she replied. But the tender smile still trembled at the corners of the lips.

"Nonsense!" she exclaimed. "Why, I tried to put you off—only, you were so persistent! What could I do?"

"Just what you did, sweetheart," was the prompt reply; "and I fancy that was exactly what you wanted to do."

This time the wife did not trouble to make denial. Instead, she turned luminous eyes on her husband, who was chuckling quietly over his simple jest.

"And then—?" she queried, half-hesitant. Her voice was a caress.

"And then," the man declared jocosely, "we settled down to wedded life—with never a honeymoon: that is, not the honeymoon of the stories; for it was love in a cottage, without even a trip to Niagara Falls, without even a jaunt to Coney Island. But it was happiness all the same."

"Even when we were poorest—always!"

"For we had each other; and there was nothing else worth while."

"Until—"

The man pondered. The vague suggestion puzzled him. Presently, however, by reason of the love that was between them, he understood.

"Until," he went on, with a reverent softness in his utterance, "until another came. We were still the universe, just we two, yet with us was a third, who was none other than ourselves in new guise."

"There were never such children as ours, John," the woman declared after an interval of silence. Her voice was a-tremble with the beautiful egotism of motherhood. "Oh, never! They have never given us anything but happiness."

The husband smiled doubtfully as he listened to the extravagant praise.

"How about our hours of agony during their illnesses?" he questioned.

"They are all forgotten now," came the undaunted answer. "And, always, a new blessedness came to us when they escaped out of the valley of the shadow."

"But there was Louise," the husband remonstrated. His tones held a note of wonder.

"Ah, Louise!" There was a catch in the throat of the woman, so that the name came brokenly. "She was too saintly a little thing for this world; she never 'belonged.' And her going brought us out of the self-absorption that had held us too close to earth. We had been too selfish, too wrapped up in each other, too forgetful that our life of love here and now was not the only Paradise. . . . That was her great blessing on us, and it endures."

A long silence fell on the two. The man was the first to speak again.

"But there were other troubles for us," he said, somewhat sorrowfully. "Our way was not all a path of roses. Think of the times when we misunderstood each other."

"Only to understand the better afterward," came the tranquil reply.

"Alas, it took so long to understand," the husband lamented; "so long to learn the sacrifices of self necessary to make our life together harmonious. We found out faults in each other, too—faults never even suspected at the first."

"And we found virtues as well—virtues never even suspected at the first," the wife retorted equably.

"True," the husband conceded.

"I have been fortunate in my business affairs," he remarked briskly, after a brief silence. There was a trace of pardonable self-satisfaction in his smile. "At last, I am able to give you whatever you wish in the way of worldly things."

"The time of real pinching was short," the woman answered blithely. "And, anyhow, though we hungered a little sometimes, we never starved quite. There was nothing startling, nothing bizarre in the tale of our early privations. But—"

"But there was a mighty deal of romance, notwithstanding," the man announced; "for we loved—always!"

The wife smiled acquiescence. Then, she began counting slowly on her fingers.

"Seven!" she cried, triumphantly. As the man regarded her in astonishment, she explained: "You said that we didn't have a honeymoon trip. Well, we've had seven—one every year since your business has become good enough to bear the expense."

"And each was more wonderful than any that had gone before," the husband asserted, with enthusiasm.

"Yet, nothing ever happened during any one of them," the wife commented; "nothing, that is, except just love; nothing except our happiness together."

"Yes," the man said reflectively, after another period of silence. "I understand your complaint when you ask why none has written our love-story. Our story is all-wonderful, it is all-splendid, it is the very essence of romance, it is full to overflowing with the supreme adventure."

"There was never a love like ours," the woman asserted boldly. "There

was never a happiness like ours. There were never such children as ours. . . . There was never such another husband as you," she ended, with a blush of adorable shyness.

"Nor such another wife as you," the man declared gallantly. His voice became very reverent, as if he spoke of something most sacred.

"And yet," the woman went on meditatively, "in all the years of our love, there has been no single thing of the sort I read in the magazine stories—never an obstacle in the course of our true love. There have been no dangers by field or flood. You have never done any one deed of heroic courage—except the humdrum routine of daily toil in an office to win our daily bread. You have never posed as Romeo under my balcony, declaiming a deathless love, which after all might not have lasted through a week of marriage. No, you have merely lived a simple love—lived it faithfully, day after day through the years. . . . According to the writers, now, our love-story is without the least trace of romance in it. Only, we know—"

"We know that it is full of the perfect romance," the husband said; "We know that it is full of the true romance of love. There is the master wonder,

the magnificent adventure, the unique glory of being: the living of this life in a love that endures."

The eyes of the two met and mingled in a gaze that told the blessed truth of their hearts.

Silence fell. Over the twain brooded a divine content, for love is the one thing of heaven that we may know.

At last, the wife spoke musingly, the while her eyes watched vaguely the flickering light that shone through the interstices of the vines.

"We know," she said sedately, "that nobody else in all the world was ever a lover like you and me; and we know, too, that never—never!—were there such children as ours. . . . And yet—well, I wonder if, after all, there may be somewhere some others almost as happy in their love as we have been, and are, and shall be. Yes, I believe—I know—there are! . . . But—"

Once again, the husband understood. "But their story, too, is never told," he said. "Oh, well, after all it's too beautiful to be told lightly, for the entertainment of a reader's fleeting mood."

"It is the perfect love-story," the woman murmured; "always, the one perfect love-story."



THE MADDING CROWD

By Stuart Taber

I WISH that people would not annoy me with small, pestilential acts of human kindness. They cheerfully, and without being asked, prepare for me things that I like to eat, and then I must endure, unflinching, a recital of their troubles. Their troubles are petty ones and I am infinitely more interested in my own troubles, for they are not petty. People smile warmly at me and surround me with an atmosphere of insipid love; therefore I cannot swear horribly at them as I would like to do. They plot and scheme for my happiness until I feel like some hunted thing. They ensnare me in a relentless web of kindness, and a beaten slave is more free than I am.

I think that I should like to be a hermit.

LIFE WINS

By Douglas Goldring

HE had come back from Paris by the night-boat that morning. It was eleven o'clock, and he was standing by the fire in his bedroom, opening his letters, when his eye had been caught by the two-days-old telegram which gave him the news. Telegrams were a commonplace of his daily life, so that he had attached no special importance to the yellow missive which had—so suddenly—told him of her serious illness; and he was, in consequence shocked and surprised. Then he felt a little faint, and rather inclined to be sick. He sank into a chair by the fire, and lay back trying to think of nothing at all; he did not, for instance, reflect how for the last few weeks he had been racking his brains for a way of ending their affair, and that now Fate had cynically come to his aid. He was very fond of her still—very—and how she loved Parma violets! Little things about their intimacy flashed across his brain; he recalled how she had once put her hand on his knee and pinched him, for fun, when they were dining at the Parkers; remembered the dance, two years ago, when they first met one another. He thought, too, of her fine nerve when the steering-gear of the car went wrong, when they were staying together at Bob Heathcote's place in Norfolk. Had he been able to draw, he could have transferred each delicate line of her face at that moment on to paper. He could see her with her head up, pale, but smiling with superb confidence. "Well, we're going there rather finely, George, at all events," she had whispered. He remembered, with a hot flush, how nervous he had been of appearing as frightened as he felt. But

Luck, a miracle, had saved them; and now she was to be struck down, to go "there" like this, meanly, with doctors and the smell of chloroform about the house. He had once had his tonsils cut—an event which he could never forget—and he had no difficulty in imagining the whole scene. What a pity it was her husband was still in India; as that husband's cousin he would have no excuse for not being solicitous. He finished dressing hastily; as he arranged his tie in the glass he went over, mentally, the long list of his arrangements. He was to go to the play that night with the Heathcotes and afterwards to have supper with some amusing people. Then there was Lady Talmage's ball in two days' time, for which he and Betty had arranged their dances only a week ago. It was incredible that anything like this should occur to upset their careful plans. Surely the doctors could put everything right, otherwise what did one pay them for? Like most healthy men he was terrified of illness, refused to face it. When he was applying for a life insurance policy he fainted during the doctor's examination.

He took his hat and gloves from the man and went out, telling the waiting cabman to stop at a florist's on the way to her house in South Audley Street.

When he arrived, the doctor had just gone. The dreaded smell of iodoform and anaesthetics reached his nostrils as he entered the hall and climbed, with trembling knees, up the thickly carpeted staircase. Her room was on the second floor; he had entered it before, but not like this. . . .

She was very ill indeed. In the half-

light her white face framed in long strands of loose dark hair looked ghostly and horrible. Her eyes were half open—she lay motionless. By the side of the bed a young nurse, fair-headed and vital, sat watching the patient intently. The girl held up her hand as he entered on tiptoe, so that he sank noiselessly into a chair by the bedside. Ugh! How horrible it was. Far off, immeasurably far, beyond the drawn blinds the June sun was shining on a joyful world.

Presently the woman on the bed moved a little, and an emaciated but burning hand slipped from under the coverlet. He took it in his larger hand and pressed his lips to it. The eyes opened a shade wider and the tired head moved slightly in his direction. "Good old George. . . . I'm . . . done in, dear, this time," he heard her whisper; and, yes, actually there was the ghost of the old, brave smile. She was going to chaff God and die. It was just like her—always game! He began to feel that he was losing his self-control, and the nurse's presence made him turn away and stare at the pale biscuit-colored wall hung with black-framed pictures.

"I think you must go now," the nurse broke in. "The doctor will be back in a moment, and Mrs. Colbourn must be kept as quiet as possible. But will you be somewhere where we can reach you on the telephone? Mrs. Colbourn, I believe, has no other relations in London."

"Relations!" the word nearly made him, in his overwrought condition, laugh aloud. That he and Betty should ever be called "relations!"

"Tell me, nurse," he said, "Oh, do tell me straight out. Is she in serious danger?"

"Yes, it is very serious." The answer was given quietly and gently, with no attempt to break the shock, but with the fine sanity that is taught by an appreciation of the transitory nature of human life. It was a sanity that he lacked.

He turned out again into the sun-

shine, after mentioning the name of his club, and walked towards the park. How good it was to see once more the lust of the eyes and the pride of life! Then he went to the club and lunched. He waited in through the afternoon, smoking cigars and reading all the interminable drivel of the English Press. No telephone message came through. He excused himself from his various engagements and dined miserably, and alone. The large, ugly room had nothing in it but waiters, "dumb" or garrulous. Nobody dined at the club now except aged men living in the country, who had dined there before the days of restaurants and were too old to form new habits. The lights had only been turned on just over his head: the rest of the lofty room, with its tall marble columns and far-off, traceried ceiling was dim, mysterious. It was peopled with ghosts. . . .

"Will you speak on the telephone, sir?" The servant broke obsequiously into his reverie. He jumped up and left the room, trembling. How terrible the commonplace things of life were suddenly become! It was the nurse who spoke; he recognized her calm, attractive voice as it came to him over the wires. Mrs. Colbourn was sinking fast, he was to come at once; she might not live through the night. . . .

Once more he found himself in the quiet, comfortable house, the house of his friend and relative, the home of his mistress. He had many memories of it, tender perfumed memories—but now everything seemed turned to ashes. It was not so much sorrow at losing a friend as loathing of illness, disease, and death which made him miserable as he entered the familiar room. A shaded light gleamed in one corner, falling on the nurse's table with its row of bottles and appliances. The rest of the room was dim and shadowy, and was given a disquieting touch of mystery by the fitful leapings of the flame in the grate, where a small fire had been lighted. The nurse came up to him as he entered: she stood quite close to him and whispered in his ear.

He was so moved by the warmth of her breath, by her physical *nearness*, that it was all he could do to take in what she was saying. He had not realized before that she was such a fine woman.

"Mrs. Colbourn is sinking," she whispered softly; "it is well that you should be here in case she recovers consciousness. I fear she may not last through the night."

"I must wait," he said, and sat down in the chair by the fire. "Will you tell me something about Mrs. Colbourn's illness," he asked. "You know I have been away in Paris, and heard nothing till I got the wire this morning." She sat down in the chair by his side, the flame lighting up her bright hair and fresh, bright face, and told him what had happened—how the blow had suddenly fallen, the progress of the disease. Every now and then she rose, went to the patient's side and listened for the faint breathing.

The night wore on. Towards midnight the woman stretched out on the bed sheltered by the clean chintz curtains, moaned slightly, and opened her eyes. Nurse and lover approached her side. "George . . ." The faint whisper escaped the deathly lips; and nothing more. She relapsed into a state of coma, and the two watchers returned to their chairs by the fire.

"I must make some tea or I shall go to sleep," said the girl. "It didn't seem worth while getting a special night nurse as I am really quite fresh. Mrs. Colbourn's maid relieved me during the afternoon." She busied herself with her preparations, and fixed the kettle in the midst of the glowing coals.

"Tell me about yourself."

The question came from him abruptly. After all, they had exhausted every other topic—but for a moment he was half ashamed at being conversational at such a time.

"I used to live in the country," she remarked cheerfully; "my father is a country doctor. I found it dull and came up to London five years ago. I've had to work pretty hard, and at first

it was awful seeing people die; but then you see so many recover, especially if they determine to, and if one helps them all one can. The battle's never lost until the very end. I like that—the fighting. Being a nurse for a girl, you know, is rather like being a soldier for a man."

"I should think it must be awful," he muttered feebly, "all among the chemicals and horrible smells, and groans—and away from the sun."

"Oh, we've all got to die some time," she said, with a smile, "it's no good forgetting it! But being with invalids only makes one feel more splendidly well." He looked at her firm, developed figure and bright eyes. How "splendidly well" she was! He was always a fool with pretty women, and his brain began to reel a little. . . .

The little brass kettle sang on the grate, and they both turned to watch, ready to snatch it as soon as it boiled. They became absorbed in this trivial occupation: neither noticed a barely perceptible raising of the eyelids of the figure on the bed, nor the turning of the tired eyes underneath them. At last the fussy bubbling and spouting of steam heralded the boiling point and two hands shot out and closed, one on the other, over the handle of the kettle, which nearly fell between the two of them.

The nurse made the tea demurely, but a pink flush tinged her small ears: while he, though outwardly impassive, with his discreet, black moustache, shaved face, and well-brushed hair, was trembling like a boy with excitement—excitement of the only kind which never palled. The light thrown by the shaded electric lamp and the dancing firelight illumined their faces as they sat together: the face of the woman on the bed looked grey among the pillows, her hair a black stain. . . .

He leant forward in his chair and put his thin, well-shaped hand on the nurse's shoulder, passing it down her arm till he reached her fingers. She looked up and smiled quite naturally: for some unexpected reason without

embarrassment now. All men made love, love is for the live—a bodily joy of which the sick woman had probably had her share—and she, Nurse Brown, was very much alive. Two o'clock struck from the neighboring church. "God, how cold it is!" He poked the fire and put on some more coal. "You will let me see you," he said, "I must see you—after this. Tell me your name and where I can find you." She told him. "I am free one evening a week," she added. His mind, almost automatically, buzzed with plans—anticipations of the banquet. . . .

Suddenly he kissed her on the lips: they sat clasped for a long minute, and he could feel the steady rise and fall of her full breast, against his shoulder. Their embrace was quite silent: no words were spoken, so that the faint

whisper which came unexpectedly through the shadows, from the motionless figure on the bed, was oddly magnified—just as sound values grow immense sometimes in large buildings.

"This is the first time in my life that I've . . . ever . . . played gooseberry." The tired but humorous little voice trailed off into a laugh, faint, but rich with amusement, which exhausted the last atom of strength in an exhausted body. The laugh ended in a deep sigh—the most horrible sound that her lover had ever in his life heard—and the sigh set free an imprisoned soul.

"We're rather beasts, aren't we?" said the nurse, as she carefully noted the time by her watch, and unhooked her fountain-pen from her waist-band.



METAMORPHOSIS

By Hal Stanley

AT dawn I am the first dew,
 At noon I am the rain,
 At night I am the hoar-frost
 Come back to earth again;
 As dew I kiss a cold cheek,
 As rain I wet dull hair,
 As frost I am a misty veil
 For brides who do not care.

Ah, somewhere in a far land,
 Where blooms the scarlet rose,
 Where lilies' hearts are yellow
 And scent of jasmine blows.
 By Nature's grace distilled,
 In crystal joy I'll lie,
 A tear-drop of surrender
 Within a maiden's eye.



TWO FRIENDS AND ANOTHER

By Achmed Abdullah

SHE looked like an idealized canvas, cold and inaccessible. Her eyes were opaque, intensely brown, and consciously innocent. Only the powerful molding of her chin and the curved slope of her long, white throat gave an indication of slumbering passions.

She was beautiful. She was complete. Yet there was something in her face which jarred people.

Up to this time her life had also been a complete thing. For from cradle to finishing school, from finishing school to the altar, it had run in a straight line. And unlike so many girls of her crowd she had been neither over-engaged nor over-kissed.

Yet there was an undercurrent at work which forced people to read a hidden and evasive note into her character for which they could not account. So it puzzled them. It was not based on reason. For she was coolly immaculate. Even her most intimate girl friends acknowledged it. The young married women owned up to it.

So did John Mordaunt.

He, whose sensitive conscience had framed a cold and exaggerated Decalogue which was harsher than the Mosaic law and more sweetly impossible than the precepts of Buddha, could not deny that the girl's life had been without a blemish.

And he wanted to deny it. He wished for a just chance to deny it. But there was nothing palpable which he could use for a nail on which to hang his brooding suspicions.

At times he was ashamed of his own thoughts. They were so unfair, so unsubstantiated. But he could not help

himself. He knew. So did the others. The thoughts were there.

There had never been the faintest gossip nor the slightest scandal to taint her. There was just a strong undercurrent of prejudice, self-condemned by its own injustice. Everybody knew it. Nobody could account for it.

So people, to atone for the injustice of their thoughts, tried to be kind to her. They were too kind. Which in itself was another injustice, even graver than the instinctive distrust and subsequent contrition which had prompted it.

That was perhaps the reason why Thomas Kramer had fallen in love with her.

Eminently successful himself, he had always had a deep sympathy, an almost feminine understanding for those who stopped short of achievement. A strong man, he had the right to a chosen weakness. And his weakness was that he had let his fine, human sympathy weave and tangle itself into love. The wrong sort of love. For love born of a man's pity throws the burden of it on the man, and leaves the woman unresponsive . . . and irresponsible.

Yes, Mordaunt had decided, that was it. Kramer had fallen in love because he had pitied. He had been promptly accepted. Too promptly, from the point of view of a respectable, rather Puritanical middle-aged bachelor. For there was the ugly fact that Kramer was forty-five and very wealthy, and that Agnes Clarke was twenty, and that in her parents' home it had always been a tug-of-war between her own dress allowance and her mother's household expenses.

Of course Mordaunt had been Best Man. But he had felt a tremor of hatred and disgust when he had slipped the plain gold ring out of his vest pocket to give it to his friend. At that moment an impulse had urged him to snatch the ring away and to hurl it through the painted window of the church.

Mad, unreasoning impulse!

For there was the bride, all innocence and girlhood in white and lace and gossamer veil. And by her side was Thomas Kramer, her senior by twenty-five years; but still good-looking in spite of his shock of iron-gray hair, in spite of his rough-hewn, square bulk of body. Also there was a youthful light in his fine, blue eyes which spoke of deep happiness, deeper tenderness.

Why, Mordaunt had tried to convince himself, this was a charming picture, a picture which was right and good in the eyes of God and Man.

But with the eyes of his soul he had beheld a different picture. He had seen it with that spiritual power of seeing which exists apart from the limited bodily organs. He had seen it as men see who have lived much in the open, huddled against the breast of Nature; familiar with the stars and the ways of water and wood; prospectors and timber-cruisers . . . the hermit-prophets of the New Centuries. And in his time he had been both.

But of course he had held his peace. He was Best Man; nothing else. And there was Kramer and that cool, stately girl: man and wife.

It was done. The knot was tied. There were handshakings and kisses and gushing words.

"My best wishes, Tom, old man," even he himself had made the conventional remark. What else could he have said?

Then the other's whispered, raucous reply.

"Thanks, John. I'm very, very happy."

Kramer had turned and looked at his wife. And in his eyes there had been that which showed that the girl was

dearer to him than the dwellings of kings.

There was no doubt of it at all. Kramer was madly in love with the girl. And he was Kramer's best friend. And as Kramer's best friend he should have been glad because of his friend's happiness.

But he was not glad.

For a moment he had wondered if it was jealousy which prompted his dislike, his instinctive distrust of the girl. But he had dismissed the thought. He was above such small, mean considerations. The other was more than a brother to him. They had served together. They had made a start together. They had battled and risen together. Together they had succeeded. They had been as one through the many years, good and bad.

Of course there were Graham and Belden, the other two partners of their firm. Both of them were good, solid men; good, solid friends. Their worth was proved and steely.

But they were younger, those two. They had come in later, on the crest of success. They had brought money and honesty and business capacity . . . also friendship as the years grew.

But they had played no part in those early years, the first fifteen years which he and Kramer had spent in the Northwest. Those had been the smashing, clanking, epic years; the years which had counted in the making of more than money. Those years had built up their friendship, that almost feminine affection which to him at least was deeper and softer than mere love of woman, because it gave more and demanded less.

He remembered the struggles.

How one day he and Kramer, very young and very broke, had followed the pipe-call of the Red Gods, across the boundary line into British Columbia, to find what they might find. That had been before the Canadian Pacific sent down its feeding-spur from the North. So they had gone on foot. Winter had caught them below the Crow's Nest Pass. And then one day,

clearing the snow from the ground to make a fire, they had found a little crumbly, black powder.

Coal! They lost no time in getting to work. They had been too poor to buy dynamite. So they had worked with pick and shovel. Heart-breaking work. And then they had found their first vein; eleven and a half feet of bituminous coal. That night they had seen pictures in the red glow of the camp fire: pictures of wealth, success, and happiness. But when back in the little Northwestern town which was their home, they had begged for a little capital, a little grubstake, a little confidence, they had been laughed at. It had been in the early days. Gold was king then; also silver-lead. But coal? . . . There was no romance in coal, they had been told; no nuggets, no sudden wealth.

So there had come years of despair and worry. There had come the hard, jagged years to test the steel of their friendship. And their friendship had stood the test. They had no written agreement. They had never even thought of one. They had slaved and believed and hoped and despaired together, as one. Necessity had forced them into clean, hard living until it became second nature as well as an ideal. They had cut down their expenses to the last penny; and so they had managed to pay their assessments and to patent the ground after a while. Finally Belden and Graham had drifted into town from Pennsylvania. They knew coal. They looked. They examined and reported. Then they interested capital.

And suddenly—it seemed overnight—the thing was done. The Independence Coal and Coke Company was an accomplished fact. The four owned absolute control; and the mine paid twenty per cent. dividends year after year.

Came more business; more branching-out. Of course they had joined the Commercial Club and the Country Club. Gradually they had let themselves be drawn into society. Gra-

ham and Belden had insisted on it. They had said that it was necessary for the business.

And so Kramer had met Agnes Clarke, and now they were man and wife. Kramer was happy . . . and he was Mordaunt's best friend.

Mordaunt looked around the little private office up in the Peyton Building where he and the other two partners had adjourned immediately after the wedding. He filled and lit his pipe. He looked at Belden and Graham. Belden was glum and cross. There was a grieved, hurt expression on his round, pink, placid face. Graham seemed nervous and distracted. He was playing with his penknife, snapping the blade up and down.

"Kramer's off on his honeymoon," said Belden; and there was no joy, no laughter in his voice.

Graham banged the table with his closed fist.

"Yes, damn that girl."

He gave a short laugh, and then he added quite inconsequently.

"It beats the devil how that type of woman brings out indecorous thoughts in a man like myself."

Mordaunt did not understand. The very harshness of his personal Decalogue made it impossible for him to fathom the subtle wickedness of spoken words. But Belden, easy-going, sentimental, soft, and therefore wise in worldly things, shot a quick, angry look at Graham. He began to wonder. He had known Graham in college.

There was a peculiar atmosphere of nervous tension. They were all afraid to voice their thoughts, afraid to show them to each other; and yet, though they did not know it, they had all exactly the same thoughts, from very different reasons. Strong men, men of big business and big, lasting success, they had trained their minds into a rigorous suppression of personal emotions. So they had fooled themselves into believing that they had none; and now, at a moment when they wished to step over the artificial barrier which they had erected as a matter of busi-

ness precaution, they found that they were inarticulate. Their very thoughts were inarticulate.

Mordaunt passed through a peculiar psychic experience. His friendship for Kramer suddenly took on a grotesque and terrible form, without losing a whit of its sincerity. For he understood that if the future should substantiate his distrust of Kramer's wife he would find himself in the dilemma of either telling his friend and thus spoiling his happiness, or not telling him. In the latter case his friendship would be watered by pity, and cheapened by a nuance of contempt for Kramer's blindness. So, at the flash of one single moment, he saw the mated horror of actual existence and imminent ruin, two entirely different phases of the same life conceived together and choking each other.

Belden was only thinking of the girl. His ideas were running in a circle. But always the thought came back to him that the one thing his conscience demanded and needed, the only thing which he could use as an excuse for his suspicions, was truth, truth about the girl whom Kramer had married. And his friendship for Kramer was bigger and stronger than Mordaunt wanted to own up to. Again Belden was a man of charity; not of that cold, calculating, selfish charity, that peculiar and distorted charity which is called altruism, but charity of understanding and feeling. So, when he wished to know the truth as he did now, he wanted to hold in his hands a living, throbbing, palpable thing which he had no right to doubt. Truth to him was a fact, a single fact; and never the logical sequence of accumulative evidence.

Graham's face was a mask.

Finally Mordaunt found words. They were broken words, illogical and rather foolish.

"Kramer loves her, boys. That's a cinch. He's mad over her . . . clean mad. So . . ." his voice hushed suddenly to an apologetic key "whatever happens . . . whatever happens . . ."

He was silent. His hands twitched nervously, helplessly.

Belden blushed a deep scarlet. He had not blushed since he was twenty.

"Of course, old man . . . whatever happens . . ."

His tones were full and sincere. It was perfectly evident that he had understood the other's cryptic remarks. But the next moment he decided that it was not fair toward the girl to understand. He looked at Mordaunt. His words came slow, heavy, deliberate.

"I don't get you, John. What d'you mean?"

Graham looked up with a sardonic smile on his lean, dark face. He had sudden thoughts of his own. And in a way he was ashamed of them. He tried to control his features, to force them back into their usual bland lineaments. But he could not do it. His smile was too instinctive, too deeply pregnant with eager meaning to disappear at his muscular willing.

Kramer, he thought, and Agnes Clarke . . . but he had no time to finish his thoughts. For Mordaunt's deep voice boomed out with an odd emphasis. It was strange, Graham thought and it made him uneasy and a little afraid. For Mordaunt was asserting himself; and he had always considered Mordaunt a sort of amiable and rather lucky nonentity, quite content to draw his twenty per cent. dividends and to leave everything else to his partners. Graham had never sufficiently understood the hard stress and strain of Mordaunt's prospecting years up North, in British Columbia.

Mordaunt spoke very slowly.

"Look here, Belden . . . and you, Graham. Kramer is my best friend. I guess he's your best friend too." He paused, then he continued in a lower voice. "That Clarke girl . . . he married her . . . she . . . she . . ."

Belden interrupted him with a show of temper.

"She's his wife, isn't she? His wife! What right have we to sit here like three cackling, gossiping old hens and

to throw mud at the wife of our best friend?"

Mordaunt colored painfully. He knew that Belden was in the right, and at that moment his distrust of the girl turned into hatred.

"Throw mud?" he murmured helplessly. "Mud?"

"Yes," Belden raised his voice. "We aren't saying much because we don't know how. But we're throwing mud at her in our hearts, in our imagination."

Mordaunt thought for a moment. Then he replied quickly, acridly.

"I am not good at expressing my feelings. But don't you understand? Don't you understand? Gosh, you ought to understand. We must stick by Kramer. We must. That's it. The girl is younger than he is. I . . . I don't know . . ." Again his voice trailed off in a helpless manner.

Belden jumped from his chair. He was more excited than before. His little gray eyes blazed, and there were hectic scarlet spots on his round, placid face.

"What do you know about her, Mordaunt? You feel we ought to stick by him? You feel? You're a devil of a friend . . ."

Graham laughed, a strange, cracked laugh.

"Don't you understand, Belden? We're supposed to be a sort of bodyguard for Kramer's matrimonial sanctity and nuptial purity. And of course we can't do it without suspecting the lady. If we didn't suspect, he wouldn't need the bodyguard." He was suddenly serious. "All right, Mordaunt. I'll do my share. I like Kramer." He was very sincere and a little solemn. "I do like him. By Gad, I do."

He continued in a strange, mocking voice.

"I'll show you how much I like him, and I'm going to call a shovel a shovel if you want me to or not. You're both afraid that the girl will deceive Kramer. That's the long and short of it. But because of some silly notion of chivalry you're afraid to speak out, to inquire.

So you sit there and suspect and insinuate. You're between the devil and the deep, blue sea. One moment afraid for Kramer, and the next clinging to some rotten old pack-thread of chivalry that keeps you from finding out what you'd like to find out. And all just because she's a woman, God bless her!" He broke into a guffaw. "It's quite fair and proper to find out all about the fellow who's going to marry your sister, eh? But when it comes to the girl who's marrying your best friend . . . of course not. Girls, eh? They're all sweet and innocent and wear cute little chaplets of pale-blue flowers. But I'm not that sort of a driveling hypocrite. Also I am Kramer's friend. So I'll do a caddish thing . . . what you'll call caddish." His voice was hard. "Listen. You're right, Mordaunt. The brand-new Mrs. Kramer will bear watching. I happen to know. You see . . . she and I . . . oh, I guess you understand all right."

And he had left the room before the others could reply.

* * *

Married life was happiness to Kramer. It seemed to be the pinnacle of his success, the final thing he had craved. He tried to be young as much for the sake of his wife as for that of his own unconscious vanity. And it was a little pathetic to behold him by her side, sailing along with the ponderous stateliness of a frigate that has snapped its hawsers.

At first his love had been so esurient that he had not stopped to consider if she returned it in kind; if indeed she loved him at all. With that sweet brutality and innocent selfishness which is the hall-mark of perfectly good and virtuous men, he had wrapt himself in the mantle of his own desires, his own emotions and passions, never thinking of the woman's end of the game. If subconsciously he would have broached the question to himself—which he did not—he would have replied, rather indignantly, that she was his wife; that of course she saw marriage and love through the same spectacles as he did

himself; and that it was the very thing marriage was meant for.

In the course of the first year of married life, his passionate love chastened and sweetened into a plethoric habit of love, a lazy love which accepted things more than it demanded, and which stepped clear of all wire-drawn sentiments. But it was very sincere and very deep. It was the greater because of his placid acceptance of it, and had developed in his soul an affection which he studied and cherished tenderly.

But even then, after his first passion had worn off, after the selfishness of his passion had worn off, he never tried to look at love from the viewpoint of his young wife. The very idea would have shocked and grieved him. He was an old-fashioned man who believed in an old-fashioned God, the God who sits serenely above facts and dates and problems and eugenics and sex-psychology.

He had forgotten altogether that it was really sympathy and pity which was at the root of his love for her. And he had good reasons to forget. For the undercurrents which once had forced people to read an evasive and hidden note into Agnes' character and life, had promptly disappeared with the ringing of the wedding-bells. The people in that small Northwestern town were in the habit of regarding marriage as a sort of homeopathic medicine which is sure of its results.

Agnes Clarke had disappeared: she had been swallowed up in the personality of Mrs. Thomas Kramer, the wife of the wealthy mining magnate. She had money to spend, a splendidly appointed house to entertain in. The subtle, hidden note which had intrigued people as long as she was unmarried, had now changed into the piquant charms of a pretty young married woman. So she was popular. And that made Kramer happier than ever. But happiest of all was he because of the fact that his three partners, the three friends of his bachelor years, were as intimate with him, perhaps

more intimate, than they had been in the old club days.

They were frequent guests at his house. They dropped in whenever they felt like it. It amused him to lord it over them. He pitied them because they were bachelors. In their presence he wore his married state with the pride with which a Roman Senator sported the purple laticlave on his toga.

His friends submitted to this harmless conceit with good grace, tinged by pity. They saw that he was happy. This disappointed them although they would not own up to it.

Since the day on which Graham had told them of his former relations with Agnes they had never mentioned the subject to each other. But they had thought about it. And so it bothered them to see that not only Kramer, but even his wife were quite happy and contented.

It was curious to watch the effect which this state of affairs had on them. All three of them passed through two distinct psychic phases.

During the first, Mordaunt was morbid, nervous, and inclined to be quarrelsome. The unexpectedness of Agnes' contentment and happiness struck him not with joy, but with sadness. It hurt his sense of morality, which was Mosaic and didactic, that she should be so happy and contented in spite of her former relations with Graham. He continuously suppressed a longing to tell Kramer about it. So, since he could not tell, and since the fact of his knowledge caused him to feel a suspicion of contempt for Kramer which did not chime with friendship, he endeavored to rectify matters by hating her worse than ever. That seemed to him the decent thing to do.

Belden, soft and chivalrous and slightly imaginative, was smitten by her smiling complacency. He saw it in the light of a beautiful atonement, and so he sought to construct her past and present life into a charming and admirable romantic episode. Even the affair with Graham seemed to fit in.

But since he thought so much about her, since he was continuously aware that he knew things about her of which he could speak neither to her nor to her husband, he was often confused in her presence. He gave the impression that he was trying to hide from her something of which he was afraid. So, when he did speak to her, he always uttered commonplaces. But—and he himself did not at first understand the reason for it—he often addressed her in a low voice, even when he spoke commonplaces, and he had a habit of turning furtively and seeing if Kramer was paying attention to what he was saying to her.

Graham was his natural self. He was gay. He was very nice to both Kramer and his wife. But he made a point of never calling at the house without either Belden or Mordaunt. He refused to think about the morality or the immorality of his former relations with her; and he tried to argue himself into an idealistic notion that marriage with such a good and virtuous man as Thomas Kramer had given her back her purity.

But even so, her continuous complacency and contentment jarred and disturbed him instead of pleasing him. He did not understand it, and he did not believe it. He would have been more satisfied and less worried if once in a while she would have allowed herself to shew a little ennui, a little resentment, a little impatience. For Graham had a very proper knowledge and appreciation of marital values, and so he could not accept her continuous contentment as genuine. He would have gladly and readily absolved her of either the existence or the contemplation of evil, had she at times given a little involuntary shudder when Kramer caressed her in his heavy, aged way.

Then came the second period. It chimed with the phase of Kramer's marriage when his passion had given way to a plethoric habit. But he was more and more happy. His wife was more and more complacent.

Mordaunt's dislike of her suddenly

changed into liking. It was a very curious phenomenon. He could not understand it himself. But the secret of it was most likely that, due to the close friendship which had linked them together for so many years, due to the silence of the many years which they had spent together in the lonely places, prospecting and timber-cruising, they had a strong influence over each other which did not depend on the medium of the spoken word; and so Kramer's happiness and contentment had influenced him subconsciously, being stronger than his own uneasiness, and had forced him to look through the other's eyes. It was perhaps thus that he accepted her as a habit of his friend, a part of his friend's life, like his heavy, black cigars, like his Republican politics, though he himself smoked a pipe and voted the Democratic ticket.

During the same period Belden's attitude toward the girl took on a peculiar shade of pompous gallantry. Personal feelings had begun, without his knowledge, to taint slightly the chivalry on which he prided himself and which he really possessed.

Only Graham continued observant and rather morose. He was very fond of Kramer, and the fact of his former relations with his wife, the feeling of guilt which accompanied it, served to strengthen his friendship and to give to it an edge of one-sided responsibility. Often, when he looked at Kramer, he felt like a thief. And he was a very honest man.

He observed Agnes closely, and he saw that in the last half-year she had grown more beautiful, more happy, more contented. He tried to find a reason for this in her husband, in what her husband meant to her. But then, with a shock, he noticed that Kramer's acquired youthfulness was disappearing day by day, and that he was fast becoming his old self of bachelor days, lazy in his personal habits, and rather messy.

Yet she was more complacent than ever. Happiness shone in her eyes and smiled on her lips. And all the

time she was charming to her husband. She made a point of being charming. Graham would have understood if ever, by word or look, she had reminded him of the tender episode which once had united her and himself. But she did not. It was clear that he had ceased to exist for her in that light.

So he was uneasy. His imagination was hard and precise. He knew men and women too well, and so he guessed what would happen if it had not already happened. It was torture to him; and this torture was sharpened because he knew that if ever it came to a catastrophe it would be up to him to decide one way or the other. Belden and Mordaunt would be useless. They would moralize. But they would not decide.

And that which he feared happened the next week. It was drama though he did not know it, though he would have denied the implication indignantly as something reflecting on his character and his business standing. It was the sort of drama which springs less from happenings than from the thoughts in the minds of men.

Kramer had gone North to Fernie for a few days to confer with the officials of the Canadian Pacific Railway about coal contracts. He had left early on Saturday morning.

That same night Belden, Mordaunt, and Graham went for a drive in the latter's motorcar. They went quite a distance toward the foot-hills, and on their return a storm came up, moving heavily, thickly and trailing gray, threatening sheets of clouds. Inside of five minutes a torrential rain engulfed them with the driving strength of a deluge, and they stopped at the nearest shelter. It happened to be Goodman's road-house near Nine-Mile Bridge, a resort which charged the highest prices and bore the most unsavory reputation in that section of the Northwest.

They entered the main room of the inn for a bite and a drink. They sat down near the window, straight across

from a row of boxes, screened by heavy crimson velvet curtains.

A waiter, carrying a tray and a couple of bottles, entered the box which was nearest to them. For a moment he left the curtain open, and involuntarily they looked at the occupants of the box. In that moment they understood the reasons for Agnes' happiness and contentment. For she was inside the box, and at her side, with his arm around her waist and his face close to hers, was Jerome Beauvisage.

Beauvisage was from across the line, from Canada; but he spent more than half of his time in the little Northwestern town where he had an office and a small apartment. He was one of the leading capitalists of British Columbia, with his finger in every pie from Valdez clear south to Panama. He was a man of sterling honesty and business integrity, and in his case the proverbial saying was true that his word was as good as his bond.

But there wasn't a married man on either side of the border who would have invited him to his house. And society in the Northwest is easy-going and tolerant of the frailties of men.

And there he was with Kramer's wife late at night in the most notorious resort of the countryside; and here were the three friends who had pledged themselves to be the bodyguard of Kramer's nuptial sanctity.

A moment later the waiter dropped the curtain. Agnes and Beauvisage had not seen the three men.

There was a stony silence. They were afraid to talk, afraid to look at each other, each fearing the others might read in the mirror of his eyes the thoughts which he was thinking. For they were all three good friends of Kramer; but in that moment, face to face with a primitive problem, their minds went off on three distinct tangents.

Mordaunt had come to accept Agnes as part and parcel of his friend's life. He felt that she deceived him in deceiving her husband. He decided that

he would tell Kramer, that Kramer must kill her, that he himself would help him to dispose of the body in such a way that nobody would ever find out. He did not consider that the knowledge of his dishonor would destroy his friend's happiness. For he and Kramer had been so close together for the many years that they were as one. So it came about that whatever hurt and grieved his friend hurt and grieved himself in the identical manner, and it was therefore selfishness, and not friendship, which counselled him to tell Kramer and to cause him to kill the woman.

Belden smiled in a fatuous manner, without knowing that he was smiling. He felt very sorry for Kramer, but this feeling was not tinged with pity, but tainted by contempt. Being a chivalrous man, he had always looked more at Agnes' side of the game than at her husband's. And since chivalry is a quality of the senses, topped by a self-conscious appreciation of virtue, once the virtue disappears only the senses remain. The result was that instead of being furious at Agnes, he was jealous of Beauvisage. Immediately he compared himself with Beauvisage. And the next moment he said to himself that Agnes was a very beautiful and desirable woman.

Graham was staring at the lighted end of his cigar. What he had seen in there, in that box, had affected him deeply. But he never thought for a moment about the woman, nor about the fact of his own former relations with her. He only thought about the

man, about Kramer, his friend. He was aware that knowledge of his wife's misdemeanor would break Kramer's heart. He thought that there was nothing more lawful, more human than to deceive sorrow. The next moment he considered that Kramer's happiness was an illusion which might be killed by a word, but that yet it was happiness, and that if you want to keep an illusion alive you must feed it with more illusions. And then he understood that there is nothing more charitable in the world than to lie in pity.

So he looked up. He addressed the others.

"Look here, Mordaunt . . . and you, Belden. Did you see that woman in there with Beauvisage, in the box?"

They answered eagerly.

"Yes . . . of course."

"What about . . ."

Graham stared at them hard for several seconds. Then he spoke in a cold, even voice.

"Nothing much. Only she looked very much like Mrs. Kramer, didn't she? And I know . . . and you know . . . that Mrs. Kramer has been home all night."

The others were silent, but they nodded their heads affirmatively. Belden turned purple, while Mordaunt was as white as chalk. They could not look at Graham. They knew that he had read their thoughts.

Graham poured himself a stiff drink of whiskey.

And he thought that only he speaks the truth who does not lie uselessly, nor for his own sake.



A MAN always wants to be absolutely sure of a woman's love—but he never really loves a woman of whom he is sure.



THE THREE WINDOWS

By Edna Wahlert McCourt.

THERE were three windows in the triangular room in which the Young Woman lived. However, she was not passionately fond of the view from any of the three windows, though at times she enjoyed each exceedingly.

Suddenly, with no warning whatever as to its coming, a Spirit stood before her. Its eyes were deep set and dark with earnestness. "Young Woman," it spoke with a sort of chanting sternness, "you have flitted back and forth too long between these windows. Inasmuch as you will pass your days in this room, it is deemed best for you to choose one of these windows to which to give your best love and to guard. You must cease this flitting! You must choose, now, one of these windows before which to place your couch and your work table. Choose, Young Woman, one of these windows!"

A little look of astonished fear crept into the eyes of the Young Woman.

She turned to the first window, where she saw Beauty,—nature beauty, art beauty, song beauty. Her fingers, her body, her throat, her heart throbbed with quick delight.—Until she gazed from the next one, out upon surging Strife,—upon life noisy, glad, struggling, busy, mad, eager, suffering, happy, singing, weeping, hungry.—Her hand crept to her throat as, slowly, she came to the third window, which was not clear glass. All she saw there was a red Heart painted upon a background of black.

Her lips quivered as she faced the Spirit half defiantly, half piteously. "It would not be fair for me to place my couch and my work table before *one* window!" she cried. "No one is enough!—no one of the three windows! I cannot choose! I cannot!"

But the Spirit was unmoved and commanded calmly, sternly,—"*Thy time is come, Young Woman. Choose!*"



I AM HAPPY

By Jean Farquar

I AM happy. I owe enough to keep me from worrying that I do not save a cent. I have friends who will buy me drinks—but not enough to make me drunk. I have an excellent digestion—and consequently no conscience, and I have not recently refused an opportunity to be pleasantly dissolute, so giving myself a chance to worry over my amazing virtue. I know I am quite worthless, so I am saved from the vice of self-pity. I know I shall never achieve anything, so I am secure from the gnawing of jealousy, and I know no envy because I have had enough of the goods of this world to know that I would waste them all if I had them again I am happy.

THE PRICE OF ORCHIDS*

A SENTIMENTAL COMEDY

By Winifred Hawkrigde

CHARACTERS

MAUDE (*The florist's bookkeeper. Young and fairly good-looking.*)

HENRY (*An ordinary, tough office-boy, about sixteen. He gives the impression of being in long trousers for the first time.*)

SLOVSKY (*The middle-aged proprietor of the shop.*)

MISS WELLS (*A timid, talkative spinster, dressed in timid, tasteful colors. Her hat, in a modest way, is crisper and more daring than the rest of her costume. She is faded, sweet, rather colorless, reminiscent of a youth that has dwindled rather than ripened.*)

MR. JACKSON (*Rather over than under medium height. Baldish, pale, with sandy moustache, and a solemn, somewhat pompous manner. Slightly older than Miss Wells.*)

A YOUNG MAN

TIME AND SCENE—Early morning of a brilliant April day. A florist shop. At the back, a broad show-window dressed with flowers, azaleas, roses, daffodils, violets. To the right of the window, a glass door, leading from the street. On both door and window, the name "Slovsky," in bold script, shows reversed. Two steps lead down from the door into the shop. The woodwork is white, and the floor tiled irregularly in large blue-and-white flagstones. On the right, up-stage, a glass showcase filled with flowers, and beyond, further down-stage, in a group of bay trees and flowering azaleas, a plaster Cupid, designed for garden statuary. On the left, shelves on which are grouped flowers, plants, vases, attractive wicker baskets, and other paraphernalia of the trade. Over the shelves, a mirror, built in. At left-centre is a white counter, on which are pen and ink, envelopes, etc., a telephone and ledgers. At lower left, an arched doorway leads to another part of the shop. The curtain rises on Maude, seated behind the counter, at work on a ledger, and Henry, who is arranging flowers in the case.

* All acting rights reserved by the author.

MAUDE:

(As the telephone rings.)

Hel-lo, this is Slovisky's. Yes'm, we make a specialty of tasteful offerings.

(Her voice drops to a tone of great sympathy.)

Soitenly, you kin leave it to us, and we will insure its being quiet and in good taste. If you'll just give me some idea of who the party was.

(Still greater sympathy.)

Oh! a little baby! Ain't that too bad. *(Sincerely.)*

Well, we must look on these things as all for the best. I would suggest six dozen of them tiny white Mignon rosebuds, in a long spray, with white ribbon. The general effect will be all green and white—light and pretty, and kinder innercent.

(Soothingly reassuring.)

Promptly at two—I'll see to it myself.

(Hangs up receiver.)

Henry, ain't that sad? A little baby only six months old. Poor little thing. I wonder what it died of? Teeth, prob'ly.

HENRY:

(Toughly.)

That's right, Maude; sob over a kid you never knew. Why, I've seen you take a dozen of them funeral orders a day, for the last four years, an' you still got a weep f'r every one of them. Sniffles is your middle name. What's it to you?

MAUDE:

(Earnestly.)

In a way it ain't nothing, but I always get to thinking how it prob'ly suffered, and how the fam'ly suffered, and what it'd been like if it lived to grow up—and how what's jest "Two o'clock prompt" to Slovisky's is something like eternal doom to them, and what's jest 29 Main Street to Slovisky's errand-boy is shelterin' thoity or forty souls in anguish. I like to think of them things, Henry. It makes the woik more interestin'.

HENRY:

(Moved by her eloquence, and therefore tougher than usual.)

Aw, cut out the sob stuff!

MAUDE:

Up to the rubber factory, now, I made two a week more, but I didn't git real life. But here—honest—I read to improve my mind, the way everyone ought to, but I often think Florence Barclay never wrote nothing half so sad or romantic as what goes right under my nose.

HENRY:

(Jeering.)

You'd oughter save your stren'th. All this sad slush takes it outer you.

MAUDE:

It ain't all sad. Many's the love affair I've watched grow from a fifty-cent bunch of vi'lets to a fifty-dollar shower bouquet of roses and orange blossoms—all bought at Slovisky's. Why, d'y'ever stop to think, Henry, that there ain't been a bright spot or a dark spot in anyone's life in this town but what Slovisky's got a record of it in their day-book? Henry, if you want to know a man's real nature, look at his florist's bills.

HENRY:

I bet it don't always woik!

MAUDE:

(Opening the book at random.)

Well, here's Billy Trendall; you know, that rich old bachelor. Oct. 1, four dozen chrysanthemums to Miss Vi'let Harvey; Oct. 7, same goil, three dozen chrysanthemums. That's all f'r Vi'let. Dec. 2d, to Miss Mary Beal—she come out Thanksgiving time—one double-size bunch of vi'lets. Dec. 15, to same goil, single size bunch of vi'lets; and in the same day, four dozen American Beauties to Miss Harriet Prouty. He's jest telephoned in an order of lilacs for that new bud what made such a hit last week. He's been going on like this f'r years.

HENRY:

(Struck by a new thought.)

Say, Slovisky's would have to close, wouldn't it, if it wasn't f'r nuts like him?

MAUDE:

Jest the same, he's got taste. He starts every goil on a new flower. It jars me when they keep on sending the same kind to every one, as if there wasn't any difference between them.

(Meanwhile, a young man, rather shabbily dressed, has entered from the street, and stands waiting, embarrassed.)

YOUNG MAN:

(Uncertainly.)

I want—

(He stops embarrassed.)

MAUDE:

Can I help you select something?

YOUNG MAN:

(Appealingly.)

Fl-flowers.

MAUDE:

(Smiling, all sympathy.)

Yes. A—a lady?

YOUNG MAN:

(Relieved.)

Yes. Something in—er—red pinks?

MAUDE:

(Without enthusiasm.)

We keep them. Is she to wear them?

YOUNG MAN:

(Rapturously.)

Yes'm; to a dance.

MAUDE:

(With confidence.)

Now, what color's she going to wear? D'you know?

YOUNG MAN:

(Rapturously.)

Pink. Pink's her color. She always wears pink to a dance.

MAUDE:

(With air of a kind elder sister.)

You don't want red carnations, then. You come in here; I'll show you what you want.

(Exeunt. Henry goes on working. Enter Slovsky.)

HENRY:

Good morning, Mr. Slovsky.

SLOVSKY:

(In good humor.)

Good morning, Henry. Business is good this morning. Two weddings, a reception and six funerals, beside the reg'lar trade.

HENRY:

Say, you orter heard Maude sobbin' on over some kid's funeral. She was worse'n ever. You'd think she was dead herself. I says to her, "What's it to you?" I says, but she—

SLOVSKY:

(Severely.)

Young man, see here! You want to cut out that gab you hand to Maude.

HENRY:

(Working busily.)

What'd I say?

SLOVSKY:

Those cheap jokes you make with that girl don't go here, d'yer see?

HENRY:

Aw, I was just kiddin'. What harm did it do?

SLOVSKY:

In the pants business, which my brother is in, you could make fun of that girl's sympathetic nature all you wanted, because there is a regular call for coats and pants, whether people got hard hearts or soft ones.

HENRY:

Huh?

SLOVSKY:

When do we have our biggest sales in the florist business? On Christmas Day and St. Valentine's Day. In other words, when everyone's full of sentimental thoughts. My brother, now, all he needs to do is fit people's arms and legs, which is easy, because they stay the same size, but what we got to fit is people's hearts—which is always changing. That's where Maude is worth her weight in gold. Whether it's a funeral order or a wedding, if the party hears a person on the other end of the wire entering into all their joys and sorrows, why, next time they got an order to

place—it goes to Slovsy's. You leave Maude alone.

(Re-enter Maude and the Young Man. She has in her hand an exquisite corsage bouquet.)

MAUDE:

(Putting them in box, and handing them to youth, with a friendly smile.)
I guess you'll find she'll like them.

YOUNG MAN:

You got my idea exactly. Just what I was looking for. You see, pink's her color.

(EXIT.)

SLOVSKY:

(To Henry.)

You see—he'll come again.

MAUDE:

(Seating herself at counter.)
Red carnations is always the sign of a gink!

SLOVSKY:

(To Henry.)

Henry, go and see if them azalea plants has been sent off to the Home for Indignant Females.

(Exit Henry, leisurely. Slovsy goes to Maude's desk in genial mood.)

Well, that was a great little scheme of yours. You want to keep it up, Maude.

MAUDE:

Keep what up?

SLOVSKY:

This sending complimentary flowers to customers when there's a chance to get special trade. Them two debbitante society buds, now, you sent roses to when you heard they'd got engaged has just sent in, on account of it, their wedding orders. You haven't see in the papers, now, any more debbitantes likely to bring trade?

MAUDE:

(Rather shortly.)

Lord knows the debbitantes get enough flowers. There's others would appreciate them more.

SLOVSKY:

You stick to the debbitantes—they're

the best proposition. Sent anythink off lately?

MAUDE:

Yes. (A pause.) Some orchids last night.

SLOVSKY:

(Slowly.)

Ah! Orchids. I don't know as you need send out orchids. Roses is good enough, or even sweet peas. Unless it was very *classy* trade?

MAUDE:

(After a pause.)

It was a party what would appreciate them.

SLOVSKY:

(With keen glance at her.)

Well, I leave it to your judgment. Only, be careful don't throw away no orchids for nothing. (EXIT.)

MAUDE:

(Enigmatically.)

H'm.

(Henry enters with a jar of bachelor's buttons, which he arranged. He drops some blossoms on the floor.)

Careful, Henry, you dropped some of them bachelor buttons.

(Henry picks them up hastily, leaving one on the floor. The telephone rings.)

You answer that 'phone, will you, Henry?

HENRY:

I got these button-neers to fix. They'll want you, anyway.

MAUDE:

(Taking up receiver.)

You want some flowers sent to your wife; what name, please—oh!—What kind of flowers shall I send?

(Coldly.)

You ain't got no preferences? (Coldly.) Very well, then, I can select them myself, if you have no choice. Any message?

(Disappointed tone.)

No? Yes, of course, your card.

(In significant tones with deep sarcasm.)

We have a supply of them here.

(Hangs up receiver with a bang.)

Well, what 'you think of that, Henry. That was young Davis who owns the rubber. This is their wedding anniversary—married just a year ago. They had the biggest wedding we ever sent out—potted palms and smilax and a solid arch of Killarney roses. The bride's bouquet was a shower of white orchids and lilies of the valley, poifectly enormous. And last month he leaves a standing order for American Beauties every morning to that Mademoiselle Looey over to the New Amsterdam Theater. They's a lot of suffering goes on in the homes of the rich, Henry.

HENRY:

Aw, I'd just as lief suffer.

(*He starts with empty tray for other room.*)

MAUDE:

(*Calling after him; she has an inspiration.*)

Henry! You go tell Slovisky to dooplicate that shower bouquet of orchids and lilies of the valley, and send them on to Mrs. Davis, with his card.

HENRY:

(*Returning, interested.*)

What's the dope, Maude?

MAUDE:

(*Sentimentally.*)

Who knows, but if he returns after an evening spent with joy-ridin' companions to find his bride of a year weepin' over a wedding bouquet of white orchids and lilies of the valley—who knows but it may stir up memories of the past?

HENRY:

(*Disgusted.*)

What's the use? A feller who'd treat his wife that way's a bum.

MAUDE:

He may be only thoughtless.

HENRY:

(*Impressed.*)

Gee! Who knows but you may fix that up, Maude? What'll you bet?

MAUDE:

There's lots that goes on under my nose I'd like to fix up.

(*Confidentially.*)

I got a case now, Henry, I'm woikin' on—

HENRY:

What d'y' mean—workin' on?

MAUDE:

(*Mysteriously.*)

Never you mind.

(*The telephone rings. She answers it.*)

Yes, madam, those violets came from us. No, we did not forgit the card. I understood from the party that the party did not want their name divulged.

HENRY:

Say, that gazabo must have money to burn to send flowers and not git the credit for it.

MAUDE:

(*Impressively.*)

Don't you believe it. It makes him seem to care more than the other men who put their cards in. And she gets thinking and thinking who it can be, and when she finds out she's half dippy about him. He won't seem like a real man to her—he'll seem all the things she imagined a man might be before she found out they wasn't.

HENRY:

(*Turning back to his work.*)

Oh, slush!

(*The door opens and Miss Wells enters, hesitatingly. She has the manner of entering on an adventure. She advances by little spurts, fluttering and retreating. She is wearing on her coat a charming, coquettish spray of purple orchids, tied with ribbon. Henry comes forward.*)

HENRY:

Can I show you something?

MISS WELLS:

(*Fluttering.*)

I—I haven't come this morning to buy. Is—is—could I see the young lady?

HENRY:

(*Bawling, at which Miss Wells shrinks.*)

Maude! Lady to see you.

MISS WELLS:

(*Turning, as if she would like to go.*)
If she's busy—perhaps—some other day.

HENRY:

(*Graciously.*)

No trouble.

MAUDE:

(*Coming forward, very cordially.*)
Why, how'd you do, Miss Wells. I ain't seen you since you came in here Easter to buy that lily for your fiancay. He like it?

MISS WELLS:

Yes—well—that is—the truth is, I didn't see Mr. Jackson for several weeks after. He is always very busy, you know—and when he did come, he forgot to mention it. But of course he liked it—he always does.

MAUDE:

(*With the purpose of drawing her out.*)

Ever since I been here—four years—you've sent him an Easter lily for Easter. I think it's a lovely idear.

MISS WELLS:

Ever since we became engaged—fifteen years ago—I have always sent Mr. Jackson a lily at Eastertide.

MAUDE:

(*Shortly.*)

Fifteen years must seem a long time to be engaged.

MISS WELLS:

(*With a touch of dignity.*)

Both Mr. Jackson and I believe in long engagements. When Mr. Jackson's business affairs get so he can leave them for a few weeks—we've always planned. And of course I expect you to help me choose the flowers.

MAUDE:

I always am partial to a pink wedding, myself.

MISS WELLS:

When we were first engaged he used to say pink was my color.

HENRY:

(*Listening, grins derisively.*)

Huh!

MAUDE:

(*Sharply.*)

Henry, you sent that order off to the Odd Fellows' banquet? If you ain't, you better get at it.

(*Henry slouches off.*)

Then you just came in to look around to-day? Not but what you're always welcome to, Miss Wells.

MISS WELLS:

(*Moves flutteringly nearer, points to her orchids.*)

I—I came about—these.

MAUDE:

(*As if to put off further inquiries.*)
Lovely, ain't they?

MISS WELLS:

(*Apologetically.*)

I suppose I shouldn't wear them, till I made sure—but they were too lovely.

(*With a little laugh.*)

I couldn't resist.

MAUDE:

(*Woodenly.*)

Made sure of what? .

MISS WELLS:

(*Happily.*)

That Mr. Jackson sent them. But of course he did—there's no one else. I—I didn't realize he could be so romantic. It was the way I used to imagine lovers would act—before I had one. (*Simply.*)

MAUDE:

How nice you look! Ain't that a new hat you got?

MISS WELLS:

Yes—I suppose it's extravagant—my last year's hat is still good. But I think—don't you?—in the spring—the April sunshine makes us look shabby. I felt I had to buy a new hat. Mr. Jackson hasn't seen it yet.

MAUDE:

I know, in the spring I always want t' start something myself.

MISS WELLS:

(*Happily.*)

I think it must have been the Easter lily that started Mr. Jackson.

MAUDE:

(*Sotto voce.*)

Fifteen Easter lilies!

MISS WELLS:

The day after I came here and ordered the lily as usual—these (*touching the flowers*) began to arrive. Yet somehow, it seems so—so reckless for Mr. Jackson. I always understood the orchid was a very expensive flower. Though the day after we were engaged, he sent me a beautiful bouquet—two dozen red carnations.

MAUDE:

(*Sharply.*)

Look here, did Mr. Jackson tell you he sent them orchids?

MISS WELLS:

No; he simply looked at them and said: "Someone has been getting reckless with her money." He—he—frequently says playful things.

MAUDE:

H'm. What did you say?

MISS WELLS:

I said: "They were sent to me without a name—but I think I recognize the donor."

MAUDE:

(*With sudden joy.*)

Oh, you said that, did you? How'd he act?

MISS WELLS:

He said, jokingly, "A fool and his money soon parted." Then we dropped the matter. From his off-hand manner I saw he didn't want further thanks.

MAUDE:

(*Disappointed.*)

Oh, yes. (*Busies herself at ledger.* Miss Wells hesitates, lingers and approaches timidly.)

MISS WELLS:

I—happened to be passing, and thought I'd drop in. Of course it was Mr. Jackson. There's no one else it could have been?

MAUDE:

(*Deliberately secretive.*)

Of course I ain't allowed to di-vulge the name of the party.

MISS WELLS:

I—I—simply wanted to make sure.

MAUDE:

(*Suddenly.*)

I'm sorry. My orders was strict. The party says to me, "I don't want the lady to know who sent them. She wouldn't remember me," he says—

MISS WELLS:

(*Gasping.*)

He said?

MAUDE:

(*Returns to ledger.*)

So I ain't got any right to let the cat out the bag.

MISS WELLS:

(*Excited, whether by pleasure, pain or both cannot easily be told by her manner.*)

Then it wasn't Mr. Jackson?

MAUDE:

(*Mysteriously.*)

Well, I'll tell you this. A man that sends carnations he usually sticks to carnations. He don't suddenly switch to orchids.

MISS WELLS:

(*Muses.*)

When I was in high school, there was a boy named Staples sent me a Valentine. The boys called him Stoops. He was cross-eyed. This—gentleman—did you notice his eyes?

MAUDE:

(*Drawing on her imagination.*)

The handsomest pair of large, boining brown eyes I ever saw.

MISS WELLS:

(*Distinctly fluttered.*)

Burning brown eyes!

(*Contemplates the idea.*)

I—I have never seen exactly that kind of eye. Mr. Jackson's are light brown, but, no—I shouldn't call them burning, exactly. What was his general appearance?

MAUDE:

Tall, imposin', well set up—the bearing of a count—of an adventurer!

MISS WELLS:

(*Frightened, yet delighted.*)

Fancy that! You don't think he could be an adventurer, do you? I—I have never happened to meet one—

MAUDE:

Oh, no, indeed! His manner was (*she unconsciously quotes from a recently read novel*) grave and kind—yet bitter—as if some woman had made him suffer. I thought he had a secret sorrow.

MISS WELLS:

As I remember Stoops, he was rather solemn; but I hardly think it was because of a woman. Of course, the teacher used to keep him after school a great deal—unjustly I sometimes thought, but—(*Disappointed.*) Yes—it may be Staples.

MAUDE:

(*Positively.*)

The name was not Staples.

MISS WELLS:

He gave you his name?

MAUDE:

(*Firmly.*)

Which I am not at liberty to divulge.

MISS WELLS:

Did he say anything which might give a clew—

MAUDE:

When I asked him for his card, he said: "Let the flowers carry their own message. She—" His voice broke here.

MISS WELLS:

(*Sympathetically.*)

Poor fellow!

MAUDE:

"She wouldn't recall me."

(*Returns to books as if matter were closed.*)

MISS WELLS:

(*Coming nearer, timidly.*)

What—what color was his hair?

MAUDE:

Jet black—but with a sprinkling of white about the temples. But not from age.

MISS WELLS:

He has suffered.

(*Consciously.*)

Ah! He must think harshly of women.

MAUDE:

(*Rallying her.*)

Them orchids don't look it, do they? Do you know what them kind costs? Two dollars apiece!

MISS WELLS:

Apiece! (*Staggered.*) Have you—is there a mirror here?

(*Maude indicates one. Miss Wells studies it eagerly, then pulls out her hair a trifle about her face and shakes her head rather sadly.*)

No. There's nothin' in my face to attract. (*To herself.*)

MAUDE:

I've always heard you was considered very pretty.

MISS WELLS:

(*Without illusions.*)

Nobody's told me so for years.

MAUDE:

Some men don't never change. To them a woman once beautiful is always beautiful.

MISS WELLS:

(*Timidly.*)

I've always supposed that was because they didn't take time to notice she had changed.

MAUDE:

He notices. He said to me to-day: "They go better with her new hat."

MISS WELLS:

(*Gasping.*)

To-day? He's been here?

MAUDE:

(Nods.)

He stood right at that shelf.

(With an inspiration.)

That very bachelor's button (*points to floor*) dropped from his coat.

MISS WELLS:

(While Maude busies herself with her books she surreptitiously picks up the flower and hides it in her purse.)

Bachelor's buttons! Poor fellow!

MAUDE:

He said: "I wonder by what happy chance she wore lilacs on her hat?"

MISS WELLS:

He must connect me with lilacs. (*Thinks.*) Some years ago I took some lilacs to church. There was an exchange rector. Does—does this gentleman—with the burning eyes—look like a rector?

MAUDE:

(Disgusted.)

Not him. He had on his vest right side to and wore his clothes with an indescribable, distinguished air. I think he had on one of them Arrow collars you see in the street cars.

MISS WELLS:

(Surveys herself again in mirror, gives a little pull to her coat, and adjusts her hat.)

Do—do you think he lives here in town?

MAUDE:

He has more of a travelled manner. Like a man who has knocked about considerable, equally at home with princes and paupers—

MISS WELLS:

What could you judge of his character?

MAUDE:

He—he looked determined. Like one who would sweep all obstacles before him.

MISS WELLS:

(Rather frightened.)

A—a strong man?

MAUDE:

With his passions under perfect control, but a whirlwind when roused.

MISS WELLS:

Perhaps—perhaps I had better keep this from Mr. Jackson.

MAUDE:

(Nonplussed, then emphatically.)

I soitenly shouldn't. I should tell him all about it. The sooner Mr. Jackson knows, the better for all concerned.

MISS WELLS:

(Wavering.)

Perhaps—but I mustn't take any more of your time. Good-by.

(She starts to go. Enter Slovisky. Slovisky, suavely, to Miss Wells.)

Are you being waited on, madam?

MISS WELLS:

(Embarrassed.)

Thank you, I don't want (*under his disapproval*) I might look at some bulbs.

SLOVSKY:

(Points to other room.)

In the other room.

(Miss Wells starts, then returns to Maude.)

MISS WELLS:

(Hastily.)

Tell him—I'm sorry.

(Turns to other room. Maude shakes head as if things were not going to her liking.)

SLOVSKY:

(Bars Miss Wells' path, with glance at Maude.)

There are beautiful orchids, now, Miss Wells. I was admiring them from the moment I saw them.

MISS WELLS:

(Embarrassed.)

They—they came from here.

SLOVSKY:

(Feigning surprise.)

Here, Slovisky's? Well, I am slow. Guess I'm losing track of things. (*Looks at Maude.*) Or maybe you got them just now?

MISS WELLS:

(*Embarrassed, over shoulder, leaving.*)

No—they were sent to me.

SLOVSKY:

(*Walking to Maude.*)

You sent them orchids to her?

MAUDE:

(*Doggedly, after a pause.*)

Yes—I did.

SLOVSKY:

(*With heavy sarcasm.*)

I don't seem to remember that we have received from her no large orders for decorations lately, now.

MAUDE:

Her name's on our books.

SLOVSKY:

(*Taken aback.*)

That so? A customer, is she? Let me see her account.

(*Maude, with an air of being in for it, hands him the book.*)

SLOVSKY:

(*Reads in disgust.*)

1913—One Easter lily. (*Turns page.*) 1914—Another Easter lily. 1915—Another Easter lily! That's what you call a good customer, huh? Say, that's good business—she buys from us annually a seventy-nine-cent Easter lily, and to keep up her vallable trade we sends her a five-dollar spray of orchids. Say, are you gone crazy?

MAUDE:

(*Keeps on working.*)

Prob'ly.

SLOVSKY:

(*Won over by her sang-froid.*)

Unless you had some good reason you haven't explained yet, maybe?

MAUDE:

It wouldn't seem like a good reason to you.

SLOVSKY:

She ain't a friend of yours?

MAUDE:

I ain't never seen her except in this

store, if that's what you mean. When I buy flowers for my poisonal friends, I pay for them.

SLOVSKY:

Your orders was if there was any flowers left at night to place them free with customers where they would do the most good.

MAUDE:

Well, let me tell you your instructions was followed. I put them flowers where they would do the most good. They've done good already.

SLOVSKY:

(*Eagerly.*)

What? An order?

MAUDE:

(*Shortly.*)

No, I slipped up against a human savings-bank named Jackson.

SLOVSKY:

Then where's the good come in—no orders to show?

MAUDE:

Them flowers had made a different woman of her already. She's got a new hat; she's waked up; she's got something to think of besides Easter lilies. Then I hoped for the best in sending her them orchids—but if nothing comes of it I ain't sorry. They've given her what every woman orter have in her life.

SLOVSKY:

(*Restraining his rage.*)

May I ask what that is?

MAUDE:

(*Shortly.*)

Romance.

SLOVSKY:

Romance! (*Enraged.*) Honest, if this wasn't a matter of dollars and cents it would be funny! Romance!

MAUDE:

(*Defensively.*)

She's been getting younger and more sprightly with every bunch.

SLOVSKY:

Every bunch? How long has this been going on?

MAUDE:

Datin' from last week.

SLOVSKY:

Then, datin' from last week you may consider yourself fired.

MAUDE:

(Surprised and upset.)

You—you—wouldn't fire me, Mr. Slovsky? Take it out of my pay, but don't fire me. I'd rather work here than any place I know.

SLOVSKY:

You're fired, all right. Slovsky's can't afford you. You're a luxury. A little heart and sentiment is all right for the flower trade. But this is a retail business. You got it enough to stock a wholesale house. You're fired.

(He leaves the room. Maude is sad for a moment, then recovers her cheerfulness.)

MAUDE:

Back to the rubber!

(Enter Mr. Jackson. He saunters about, trying to decide how to begin. Starts toward Maude, lingers near showcases, then calls out.)

MR. JACKSON:

What do you call those purple flowers?

MAUDE:

(Snappily.)

Orchids.

MR. JACKSON:

What's the price?

MAUDE:

(Calls.)

Henry!

(Enter Henry.)

This gentleman wants to buy some orchids.

HENRY:

Say, Maude, I got important business. Can't you attend to him?

MAUDE:

(Briefly.)

I'm fired. I may have too much

heart, but I ain't got so much heart I go on workin' for Slovsky free after I'm fired.

HENRY:

Fired? Say, you're kidding. Slovsky thinks the world of you, kiddo.

MAUDE:

(Bitterly.)

Go on, wait on the gent. *(Takes a look at Mr. Jackson.)* Take it from me, it's time I went back to the rubber. I would never of sized him up for better than jonquils.

(Exit to inner room.)

MR. JACKSON:

Have I got to wait here all day?

HENRY:

(Moves to case, opens it invitingly.)

Just a minute, sir. Which kind do you want?

MR. JACKSON:

I didn't say I wanted any. I—I wanted to know the price.

HENRY:

(Brings out two bouquets.)—One dollar for the plain ones; two for the speckled.

MR. JACKSON:

(Touching a speckled one with awe.)

This was the kind. Two dollars a dozen for these?

HENRY:

A dozen? Naw, apiece.

MR. JACKSON:

(Struck all in a heap.)

Wh—why—it's outrageous! I must see the proprietor at once. Do you hear—I must see the proprietor!

(Maude returns.)

HENRY:

Maude! Here's a gentleman wants to see Mr. Slovsky.

MAUDE:

(Pins on her veil deliberately.)

Well, get him. He's out in back.

MR. JACKSON:

(With guile points to orchids.)

Do you sell many of these?

MAUDE:

We do. They are popular with the ladies.

MR. JACKSON:

(Rather struck.)

That's so. She seemed to like them.

MAUDE:

(Taking notice.)

Who?

MR. JACKSON:

Miss Wells is the lady I referred to. Of Chestnut Street.

MAUDE:

(With volumes in her tone.)

H—h! *(Looks him over. Secretly delighted.)*

I've sorter been looking for you, Mr. Jackson.

MR. JACKSON:

Eh?

MAUDE:

(Covering.)

Didn't we have the pleasure of sending you an Easter lily last week?

MR. JACKSON:

(Heavily.)

Hey? Well—I didn't come about that. I—I happened to be passing, and I thought I'd drop in and inquire who sent those flowers she's been getting this last week.

MAUDE:

(Elaborately.)

Oh! I will look.

(Searches through ledger.)

There was no card sent.

MR. JACKSON:

I know that. If there had been a card sent, naturally I should have known where the flowers came from.

MAUDE:

As they were sent without a name, I am not at liberty to divulge the party.

MR. JACKSON:

But to one of the family. *(Maude looks inquiringly.)* Practically, I have been engaged to Miss Wells for fifteen years.

MAUDE:

(Dryly.)

Oh!—Then you're practically one of the family.

MR. JACKSON:

I happened to be passing, and thought I'd inquire if the card had been overlooked.

MAUDE:

(Firmly.)

The intention of the party was he did not want his name sent.

MR. JACKSON:

(With great interest; rather belligerent.)

He! What'd he look like?

MAUDE:

(Looks Mr. Jackson over critically.)

Some taller than you. *(Mr. Jackson straightens himself.)* And considerably younger. Very handsome. With large, brown eyes, and a dashing manner.

(Mr. Jackson tries to look dashing.)

Handsome as a Greek god!

MR. JACKSON:

Well, I'd like to know what he means! Did he explain himself?

MAUDE:

I am only here to take orders. I don't ask a person what their motive is for sending flowers. We don't require a license before we sell to them.

MR. JACKSON:

It may be an advertising scheme. Did he look like a—a life insurance agent.

MAUDE:

(Smiling cryptically.)

He looked more like a gentleman who's never had to soil his hands with trade. *(Mr. Jackson furtively examines his hands.)*

MR. JACKSON:

Well, what'd he say? Remember, it's my fiancée he's been sending flowers to.

MAUDE:

(Affecting reserve.)

In—in that case I don't feel I ought to tell you what he said.

MR. JACKSON:

(In the manner of an amateur detective.)

Ah! He did say something, then?

MAUDE:

Really, Mr. Jackson, it would be a breach of confidence. You being her fiancé you can be generous to one less fortunate?

(She begins to believe her own fiction.)

MR. JACKSON:

(More alarmed.)

I insist—or I must speak to the proprietor.

MAUDE:

(Alarmed.)

I'll tell you—though I shouldn't.

(Mr. Jackson leans forward eagerly.)

He only said: "The best is none too good for her."

MR. JACKSON:

(Sotto voce.)

Two dollars apiece!

MAUDE:

And though perhaps I shouldn't mention it, his voice trembled when he spoke.

MR. JACKSON:

(Bitterly.)

And she's kept me in ignorance—absolute ignorance!

MAUDE:

(With false sympathy.)

Perhaps you ain't been seeing much of her lately?

MR. JACKSON:

Why—I've been busy—

MAUDE:

It's so easy for another to profit by our neglect.

MR. JACKSON:

I don't understand it. She doesn't know any other men. Why, we've been engaged for fifteen years.

MAUDE:

(With covert sarcasm, which Mr. Jackson does not see.)

Think of that! You wouldn't think she'd want a change after being engaged to you fifteen years, would you?

MR. JACKSON:

Why, no.

MAUDE:

Yet, sometimes that's the kind of engagement gets broken oftenest.

MR. JACKSON:

(More alarmed.)

You think so?

MAUDE:

(Musingly.)

I suppose it's because a woman gets so deadly tired of the same man. Then, when some dashing stranger appears and dazzles her with unaccustomed attentions—why, I s'pose it turns her head. *(Watches effect on Mr. Jackson.)*

MR. JACKSON:

(Excited.)

I forbid you to send her any more of that fellow's flowers!

(Enter Miss Wells, sees him, and shrinks back.)

MISS WELLS:

(Almost inaudibly.)

Mr. Jackson!

MR. JACKSON:

(Turns and sees her. Bitterly.)

Here you are, then. To meet him, I suppose?

MISS WELLS:

(Guiltily.)

To meet whom?

MR. JACKSON:

(Sternly.)

I see you have on his flowers. Tell me the worst. How long has this fellow been in love with you?

MISS WELLS:

(Nervously.)

I—I don't know.

MR. JACKSON:

(Sternly and reproachfully.)

Jessie, I want the truth.

MISS WELLS:

(*Faltering.*)

It must have been a very long time.

MR. JACKSON:

And you've deceived me. You've made me think I was the only man you cared for.

MISS WELLS:

Truly, James—I did think so—until to-day.

(*Maude starts guiltily.*)

MR. JACKSON:

(*Groaning.*)

Until to-day!

MISS WELLS:

I mean—I never knew he cared—until to-day.

MR. JACKSON:

And has he turned you from me? After fifteen long years—

MISS WELLS:

(*With some spirit.*)

It's the first time they've seemed long to you!

MR. JACKSON:

(*With intended bitterness.*)

It's been longer to you, perhaps.

MISS WELLS:

Yes, it has been long, James. When we were first engaged, it was different. You sent me flowers then; you were anxious to please me. You said that you had placed me on a pedestal.

(*With a tremulous laugh.*)

It's taken me these years to find out the pedestal was a—was a—was a shelf.

MR. JACKSON:

(*Genuinely surprised.*)

Why, Jessie—I've always meant to get married some day. We've never got around to it. There have been so many other things.

MISS WELLS:

If it had been first in your mind, the other things could have waited. No! I'll say now what I've never dared to think before—you haven't been the sort of lover I've always wanted.

(*She glances down at the orchids.*)

I can imagine some men—more impetuous than you—

MR. JACKSON:

(*Feeling very badly.*)

Ah, that's the kind of man he is, I suppose.

MISS WELLS:

Sweeping all before him.

MR. JACKSON:

(*Bitterly.*)

Young and handsome; a dashing stranger dazzling you with unaccustomed attentions! And just because I haven't made a fool of myself over you—that's what you like!

MISS WELLS:

Yes—we do like to have men make fools of themselves over us. It proves they care more for us than for their own appearance.

MR. JACKSON:

You women are all alike. The devotion of a lifetime is nothing when some good-looking adventurer comes along—

MISS WELLS:

(*Touching her flowers.*)

Why do you say adventurer?

MR. JACKSON:

What else is he? Sending orchids—to another man's fiancée. At two dollars apiece!

MISS WELLS:

You've often said it was the sentiment which counted—not the price.

MR. JACKSON:

This—this is a different matter. What right has he to any sentiment over you? I'm going to hunt that fellow up, and—and give him what's what. (*He finishes lamely.*)

MISS WELLS:

(*Frightened.*)

James! For my sake—don't give him what's what!

MR. JACKSON:

(*Bristling.*)

You're trying to shield him!

MISS WELLS:

(*Frightened.*)

No, James. It's you I'm trying to shield. He's a tall, imposing man. He's twice as big as you are!

MR. JACKSON:

(*Enraged.*)

I don't care if he's three times as big. I'm going to stay here till he comes—and fight him!

MISS WELLS:

Don't! He's a whirlwind when roused!

(*Mr. Jackson remains in pugilistic attitude.*)

James—I'm not the sort of woman who enjoys seeing two men fight for her. If you want to keep my affection, you'll come back with me now.

MR. JACKSON:

(*Catching at the word.*)

Then I still have a chance? Will you give him up for me?

MISS WELLS:

(*Hesitates, then sighs and says*)
Yes, James.

MR. JACKSON:

Jessie!

MISS WELLS:

I'll be honest with you, James. In some ways he is more my ideal than you are. He is—he seems to be—all I imagined a lover ought to be. But when I think of a husband, I can't imagine anyone but you. I've got so used to you, James, in those fifteen years.

MR. JACKSON:

And I've got used to you. So used to you, maybe, I didn't seem to appreciate you till he came between us.

MISS WELLS:

But I like to feel there have been two men in my life, James.

MR. JACKSON:

(*Jealously.*)

So that you can coquet with us both?

MISS WELLS:

(*Earnestly.*)

No—it isn't that, truly. But it makes

me feel I'm giving more to the man of my choice.

MR. JACKSON:

(*Pleased.*)

You look so pretty, Jessie. I don't blame the other fellow much. (*He looks her over critically.*)

MISS WELLS:

Perhaps it's my hat. (*Under his gaze, uneasy.*)

What don't you like about me?

MR. JACKSON:

Those flowers. Will you take them off? If you want flowers, I'll get you some.

MISS WELLS:

(*Reluctantly.*)

He meant them in the most respectful way.

MR. JACKSON:

Take them off.

(*She obeys, laying them on the shelf reluctantly, almost tenderly. He goes to the show-cases, signalling to Maude, who has busied herself at the extreme back of the shop during this last dialogue. As she approaches.*)

I want to see some flowers.

(*Maude glances knowingly at the empty place on Miss Wells' coat and smiles.*)

MAUDE:

(*Demurely.*)

I don't wait here any longer, but I'll wait on you with pleasure. What kind do you prefer?

(*Mr. Jackson gravitates toward the carnations. The two women on either side with a sort of critical challenge which increases as he nears a decision.*)

MR. JACKSON:

These carnations (*He falters, perceiving the lack of sympathy*) are pretty.

MAUDE:

(*Pleasant but firm.*) They are all right, of course, but compared to orchids—

MR. JACKSON:

(*Wavering, looks at Maude, at Miss Wells, and at the orchids; puts his hand in his pocket meditatively but un-*

consciously, then braces himself resolutely; to Miss Wells.) Would you prefer orchids, Jessie?

MISS WELLS:

No, James; some other flower, please.

MAUDE:

(Helpfully.)

Violets is very nice.

(Mr. Jackson looks at Miss Wells, inquiringly.)

MISS WELLS:

I'm very fond of violets.

MR. JACKSON:

(With new jocularity.)

Violets it is. (Takes another brace.) The largest bunch you have, young lady.

(Maude selects a magnificent arrangement, gives it to Miss Wells, who pins it on. Mr. Jackson leads the way to the door.)

MAUDE:

Shall I wrap up these orchids for you?

MISS WELLS:

(Mr. Jackson at door, waiting.)

No, tell him I'm sorry. He mustn't send any more.

(She hesitates, then takes the bachelor's button from her purse, considers discarding it, then returns it to her purse. Exit. Enter Slovisky and Henry; Miss Wells and Mr. Jackson pass the window, engrossed.)

MAUDE:

(Rather bitterly.)

No danger, he won't.

SLOVSKY:

(Surveying Maude with disapproval.)

Well, you didn't lose no time getting your hat and coat on. The custom is when fired to finish out the day.

MAUDE:

It ain't my custom. When I'm fired, I go. (She starts for the door. Henry mutely shows his sympathy.)

SLOVSKY:

Well, good-bye, Maude. Remember, I ain't got no hard felings, but you un-

derstand business is business, and sentiment's something else.

(Shortly.)

Good-bye. (Sotto voce, to Henry): Say, Henry, tip me wise if anything comes of that bridal bouquet. If them orders to Mlle. Looey begins to fall off, you'll know. (To Slovisky, indicating orchids on counter.) Your orchids have come back.

(As she starts to leave, Slovisky takes the orchids and puts them back in the case.)

MISS WELLS:

(Entering, to Maude.)

Are you going out? I—I wanted to leave an order.

(Slovisky edges nearer.)

MAUDE:

(With glance at Slovisky.)

I can take it.

MISS WELLS:

Mr. Jackson and I have been talking it over. He's very insistent; he wants me to—to make it very soon. So I said—next month. There's really no reason why it shouldn't be next month—though it seems so sudden.

MAUDE:

Now, I'm glad to hear that, Miss Wells. I shall take a poisonal interest in this. For you, I should advise (They move toward the cases and stand talking; Slovisky edges nearer.)

SLOVSKY:

Can I help you, Maude?

(To Miss Wells.)

May I ask the occasion?

MISS WELLS:

(Embarrassed.)

A—why—a wedding.

MAUDE:

(Triumphantly.)

A church wedding, St. Mark's.

SLOVSKY:

(Respectfully.)

Ah! St. Mark's?

MAUDE:

Roses and southern smilax.

Ah-h!

SLOVSKY:

MISS WELLS:
(*To Maude.*)
I think I can leave it to you—your taste is so exquisite. Mr. Jackson is waiting for me. (*Exit.*)

SLOVSKY:
(*Shame-faced.*)
Did you know about this here wedding when you sent those orchids?

MAUDE:
(*Triumphantly.*)
Yes, I arranged that wedding. (*She starts to go.*)

SLOVSKY:
(*Advancing cordially.*)
When I make a mistake I'm willing to say so. I ort a known a smart girl like you would a had a reason behind her. Now, you take off your coat and hat and stay. You're what I always said, an asset to the business.
(*Maude deliberates. The telephone rings. Slovsky answers it.*)

SLOVSKY:
Yes—I see, I see. Now you just wait a minute and I'll get our young lady to attend to you. Maude!
(*After a moment's deliberation Maude slowly removes her coat and goes to the telephone. A sigh of relief from Slovsky and Henry.*)

MAUDE:
Hel-lo! I see. Naturally you do.
(*Almost falling into the receiver.*)
Oh, might I ask how much did it weigh? Nine pounds—think of that! You used to send her vi'lets and roses, but you want this to be something different. Now, why don't you send her one of them old-fashioned baskets, with paper lace around the edges. (*She revels in the sentiment.*) All filled with little pink rosebuds and pansies and mignonette and forgetmenots? (*She laughs sympathetically.*) And I'll just put in some johnny-jump-ups for the baby!

CURTAIN.



LOVE IN AUTUMN

By Ludwig Lewisohn

KNEE-DEEP the burnished leaves,
And the great, grey wind above
Flapping its monstrous wings—
And you and I with our love.

Death and despair at heart,
Death in the rain-swept skies;
Sudden I turned and saw
Your miraculous eyes.

A whole world's love in your eyes
For me that day we met
By the desolate, storm-vext river—
My heart shall not forget!

JUSTICE

By Ramsey Benson

A PEASANT being summoned to serve on the jury thought of his flocks and fields and didn't see how he could spare the time.

"Let me off, O learned judge!" he implored. "Everything will go wrong if I absent myself from my farm."

But in vain. "The interests of justice," declared the learned judge, severely, "transcend all other interests."

So the peasant was fain to submit. He sat on the jury for three weeks and in that time helped grant a divorce, find a colored man guilty of stealing a chicken, and assess damages in the sum of \$1 in a personal injury suit.

When he went home at last his wife

ran forth to meet him. She was in tears.

"Woe's me!" she wailed. "The wolves have carried off half the sheep, the grapes are rotting on the vines and the corn is so full of weeds it can never be redeemed."

The peasant rebuked her narrow outlook. "So long as the transcendent interests of justice are served," quoth he, "what matter ours? Besides, I have earned \$1.20 a day during my absence. It is true my board cost me a dollar a day, but I have nevertheless brought home almost \$5 in real money, or more than enough to keep us in lead pencils for a year!"

The woman regarded him uncertainly. She half suspected him of irony.



THE EXILE RETURNS

By Owen Hatteras

A MAN who had been lost in barbarous lands for twenty years came back to New York. As his ship steamed up the bay he communed with himself in the following terms:

"It will be a sad homecoming. I will find most of my old friends scattered to the four winds, and of those that remain the men will have forgotten me and the women will have grown old. But this much, at least, I can rely

upon: the girls in the Broadway shows will be the same age. They are *always* the same age."

Alas, for our melancholy home-comer: even this last comfort was denied him. The girls in the Broadway shows were *not* the same age, *but twenty years younger*. And when he sought them out later on, he found them sitting on the knees of his old friends' sons.



KANGAROODLEDOO

By Louis Wilkinson

EDWARD RAYNES, just down from Cambridge and sick of examinations, was passing a little time at a seaside place in Hampshire. In sportive mood, he captured an elderly colonel, who struck him, to use his phrase, as a ripe old bird. Edward invited confidences from him over whiskeys-and-sodas in the draughty Bar Parlour of the Promenade Hotel.

The Colonel only talked when he drank, and Edward soon discovered that gin was really his tippie. They sat together from half-past three till seven, and the Colonel gradually unwound his long, white comforter from his neck as he felt the spreading warmth of his liquor. He was a gradual person, who drank and talked astonishingly slowly at first, but when he reached a certain point he got on the slide, as it were, and both activities were remarkably quickened. He had been a great deal in Australia, his conversation tended towards that country. It appeared that Australia had been his special study. Edward professed himself amazed and delighted by the range and interest of his disquisitions. The Colonel's face grew redder and redder, his large, pale-blue, watery eye more and more provocative as he discoursed of the more intimate aspects of the aborigines and the kangaroos. Edward was really enchanted by such liveliness, such piquancy and *verve* of narrative. His companion abounded in anecdotes and had a nice gift of rhetoric into the bargain. He understood climax.

"By Jove, sir!" Edward exclaimed, "you should lecture on this subject, sir, you really should."

"Lecture—eh?—what?" replied the

Colonel, with one of his irresistible hiccoughs. He closed one faded eye with an indescribable expression of blended solemnity and *espièglerie*. "Lecture, eh?" he repeated—"to the ladies—what, young feller? Jus' the thing for the ladies."

The liquorish accent of "ladies" was quite wonderful. Edward was in ecstasies.

"Why, of course, sir," he said. "Higher education—just the thing—enlargement of the sphere of women."

The Colonel was tickled by this last phrase, and a few minutes later he had promised Edward a lecture. Edward was to manage it all. In a few days posters through the town announced that Colonel Benjamin Brighouse would lecture under the auspices of the Women's Educational League—Edward knew the vicar whose wife was president—on the Friday following, at eight-thirty p. m., on "Life in the Antipodes." The title, Edward thought, left the Colonel a great deal of scope.

Edward was perfectly right. It was never denied that the Colonel had scope that evening. He was certainly rather nervous to start with, few of his sentences had any ending, and he cleared his throat ferociously. He stammered of the flora and fauna, he rambled on about the Australian climate. Every few minutes he helped himself from the water-jug which was on a table by him. He had no notes.

Towards the end of the first half-hour the audience began to settle down to that intelligent and meritorious boredom usual at lectures. Then Colonel Brighouse warmed suddenly to his work, he broke off his wandering re-

marks about the climate and the flora and fauna, and launched out into that description, so passionately desired by Edward, of the domestic liberalities of the aborigines. His hearers were bored on longer, they listened with marked attention, and very soon the vicar's wife began to display an uneasy mind. The Colonel grew more and more eloquent over native marriage customs, he embarked upon analysis and illustration, he exposed to view permutations and combinations of very vivid and various kinds. The men of the audience began to shuffle, to look furtively sideways and at their toes, to whisper dubiously to one another, while the women looked straight in front of them in a stressed silence.

Suddenly the vicar's wife rose. She had scented a gross innuendo in one of the Colonel's observations. She beckoned urgently to her three daughters. The girls obeyed the signal, reluctantly, following their mother, with heightened colour and compressed lips. Her face was stern and strained and suffused with crimson.

"Dear madam!" the Colonel called to her up the hall, "dear madame, please don't go. Shouldn't like you to go, y' know—not like this. I didn't mean *that*, y' know"—his voice grew louder and louder—"oh, no, ladies, not for the world—abshlutely not. But as that very intelligent lady who is now leaving the room undershooed me to say—"

The vicar's wife clapped her hands sharply over the ears of her youngest girl as she hustled her daughters out. At the door she turned and called across the hall: "John!"

The vicar jumped to his feet. His head was thrust inquiringly, anxiously forward, his eyes revolved perplexedly. He had come in late and was at the back, near Edward. There he stood, harried, inadequate, writhing almost visibly between the pronged alternatives of public interference and disobedience to his wife. The Colonel went on, unruffled. Edward had observed with infinite satisfaction, and was now enjoying himself more than ever.

"John! Do something."

At once the scared man darted over to Edward. "What does this mean, sir?" he demanded.

Edward replied: "Most instructive," with a sobered face. The vicar was confounded. He glanced appealingly at the leading doctor of the town, who was a man of weight in the community and had introduced the lecturer. The doctor rose pompously and said: "Pardon me, Colonel Brighthouse, but I would ask you to limit your observations—"

The Colonel waved his hand at him and rejoined: "Perfectly right, my dear boy, I don't for a moment queshtion that you're perfectly right." Then he resumed.

"John!"

The vicar jumped again. He called, shrilly: "Really, I must ask you to be less *free*, sir!" The Colonel looked at him, hiccupped and rolled his eye. But he showed no inclination at all either to follow the suggestions made, or to stop.

By this time there was considerable commotion in the hall; some other ladies were following the lead of the vicar's wife. Chairs and rustling garments made a good deal of noise, but the Colonel took no notice, except that he raised his voice and occasionally drew down the lid of his left eye very slowly and solemnly. He was extremely fluent now, he exhibited the easiest possible command of his subject. From those startling aborigines he had branched off to the multiplying kangaroo. He knew everything about kangaroos. "I may surprishe you rather, ladies," he put in by way of introduction, "I may jus' possibibly surprishe you." He never addressed the audience as "ladies and gentlemen," but confined his remarks, out of sheer gallantry, to the female sex.

"John!" came the voice again, from the other side of the part-open door, sounding a note of inexorable finality.

The vicar's harassed mind was at last made up. He summoned all the reserves of his moral indignation and, using his utmost efforts to assume the air of a man who will be no longer trifled with, he hurried through the hall

to the platform, which he mounted as authoritatively as possible.

"This must stop at once, sir!" he cried out. "At once! It is intolerable!"

"The mosh 'straordinary thing," the Colonel continued, "about these kangaroos—these kangaroodles—these dear little kangaroodledos"—he gave a little skip—"mosh 'straordinary thing is that they never seem to know when they've, so to speak, had enough. Fact is, they—"

"The ladies"—the vicar's sudden courage was ebbing—"I must really ask you, sir—it is my duty—Maria says—my wife says—I must really—Maria says—"

"'Nough's as good as a feast"—the Colonel's discourse flowed on and over the agitated chirpings of his interrupter—"good as a feast. And when you come to think of it, ladies, a damn sight—beg pardon, I should say a whole lot better. You and I, ladies, we know—ah, I remember once when I was in Madrahsh—in eighty-seven—"

"I protest! In your name, ladies and gentlemen, I protest against this outrage! I—"

The vicar, taken aback by his own audacity, choked and clutched at the water-bottle. He poured himself out a glass and hastily gulped. Strangled, he turned a convulsed face towards the Colonel.

"Gin!" he spluttered. "This is gin!"

"Excellent gin," said the Colonel, gravely.

Amazement, incredulity, distress, horror swept the vicar's countenance. It was the moment for which Edward had been waiting. He had seen to the gin. Delightedly he watched the vicar draw himself to the restricted limits of his height.

"I call upon you"—he gasped and gurgled—"I call"—he coughed explosively, and then in a breathless, agonized rush concluded: "Maria says you're to come away!"

Tears streamed down his scarlet face

as he stumbled from the platform and trotted martially out, followed by a straggling tail of his parishioners. To Edward, who was sitting bent forward, with his chin between his hands, in the attitude of an earnest student, he hissed almost savagely as he passed: "I can't express my sense—I—I should be glad to see you, to-morrow morning."

"Ladies—" the Colonel went on, leaning in an ingratiating posture with one arm on the table and one leg stretched at an angle, "ladies—I put it to you—"

Unfortunately there were hardly any ladies left. Very soon only two of them remained—the Miss Perews, elderly spinsters, who occupied seats in the very middle of the front row, and sat motionless, gazing fixedly at the Colonel with an expression of strained intensity as though they had been hypnotized. Edward was alone in the hall with them, but the Colonel did not flag. At length Edward very courteously approached the two ladies and offered to conduct them home. He thought it was time. The elder Miss Perew shook her head sadly at first, but soon they rose and followed Edward, remaining in a state of silent stupefaction all the way to the door of their house.

When they left the hall, the Colonel was wilting a little. He had been at the top of his form about ten minutes before. Edward returned and found him seated very low in his chair on the platform, chuckling, muttering, smacking his lips, looking round and about. He refused to leave. "Can't go, dear boy," he chortled, "can't possibly go. Time of my life—time of my life. Can't *possibly* go. Kangarooda!" he cheered, "Kangaroodledoo!"

Edward was too sleepy to stay on any longer. The Colonel, left alone, slept on the platform and was found there next morning by the charwoman, lying flat on his back and breathing heavily. Edward took an early train.



THE TREASURE

By C. Y. Harrison

GLANCING about him, but still running rapidly he rounded the corner at full speed. He paused for a moment and then ran to the outskirts of the town. He stopped and took stock of himself. Terror was outlined on every feature of his face. Night had fallen and the trees cast hideous and fearsome shadows.

"I must get there before anyone discovers it," he thought. Looking around again, he fancied that he saw something dart behind that big black rock. Who could it be? Someone was following him! His heart beat more rapidly at every passing moment. His body quivered. Inwardly he wished he had not acted so rashly in burying it in a

spot where anybody might discover it by accident.

Yes, he would walk on very slowly, so that no one might suspect him. One must use discretion in a matter of this nature!

He walked until he reached the border of a clump of trees and bushes. He took a final glance about him and entered the woods.

Ah! now for the end of this confounded affair. Yes! there is the spot over there by that big moss-covered tree.

He fell to digging feverishly, and at last he struck it. At last, with a joyful bark, he seized the bone, and ran off with his tail wagging.



RÉVEIL

By Donn Byrne

BEHOLD! This world I made with many an elf;
With gnomes and little people of the hills;
With shadow kings and dukes and margravines;
With men-at-arms; with knights in panoply,
And all within my little empery—
My courtly tournaments; my gallant scenes;
My hills of yellow furze; my little rills
That tinkled like a mass-bell; and my hives
Of honey bees; my owls that hoot o' night;
My cardinals, my bishops, and my priests,
My bannerets, my bugles, and my drums,
All of these fade, and mark you I myself
Am fading, like the moon when morning comes.



WOMEN never confess. They get caught because they confide.



REVOLT is the attempt of mediocrity to attract attention,

THE LASS OF GALILEE

By John McClure

HE often said my lips were sweet. He said
There was no peace to be had in the world
Like that to be had of a woman.
He said
Wonderful beautiful things about my eyes.
And I laughed like a child, believing him,
Because he was always so tender.
I forgot my mother and father and all the world,
Believing him, because he was always so wistful . . .
He was no money-maker. He was no good carpenter.
But I loved him.

He was always so wistful and silent.
He did not talk much.
When he spoke,
His words were soft like whispering.
There was music in them like that of leaves,
Tender and sad.

He said that he loved me.
My heart had become a dream about little children.
He was no good carpenter;
But he might have earned money one day.
My heart had become a dream
Tremulous with the patter of little feet
And whisper of children . . .
He was always so wistful and silent.

There was always a sadness in his eyes
When he kissed me, a very great sadness.
I think he was never altogether happy with me.
But he said that he loved me . . .
He was so wistful;
He read in great books
And talked of things I could not understand.
There was always a sadness in his eyes
That I could find no reason for.

Sometimes it seemed he could not kiss me enough.
He said there was no peace in the world
Like that to be had of a woman.
But still he was sad.
When I smiled, he smiled too—always—
But it was so wistful.

THE LASS OF GALILEE

When I laughed with the happiness of loving him,
He smiled.
But it made him seem so much older than I.
He said I was like a little bird
That laughed without knowing the reason . . .
He seemed so old,
So much older than I.
But he said my lips were sweet.
He loved wet kisses . . .
I think he had known few women.
But when he told me that he had known none
I knew that he lied.
All men are one. . .

He read in great books.
I was afraid even in those days
He would forget me.
He was too sad to remember a woman.
I cried at nights then
With thinking of it. . .

But he said that he loved me.
Once he smiled.
He said that the little flowers with white petals
Smiled all day,
And was he less than a flower?
But he was sad again in no time.

Mostly when he smiled
It made me feel like crying . . .
He needed taking care of.
He was so wistful and helpless.
He was no good carpenter.

One evening he came and sat with me a long time
And said nothing.
That night he was more tender than my mother.
Next morning they came to me and said:
"He is gone. In the direction of Samaria.
Preaching his dreams."
I never saw him again. . .

They say he would let no one mention my name. . .

Now always I sit with my mother and spin.
The young men of Nazareth come often
Trying to talk with me.
They are good carpenters.
They come always trying to talk;
But they are nothing to me. . .

Folk say he would let no one mention my name. . .

He wanted to save the world,
 Preaching his dreams.
 He did not save it.
 Men here where he lived are evil still.
 The men on the other side of the mountains are evil as ever.
 There is no good in the world.
 He did not save it. . . .

He said that he loved me.
 My heart had become a dream about little children.
 My heart had become a dream
 Tremulous with the patter of little feet
 And whisper of children. . . .

Now always I sit with my mother and spin.
 They told me five years ago
 He was crucified in Jerusalem.



DONNA É MOBILE

By Lilith Benda

HE married when he was twenty. Now he is sixty, and still a happy, faithful husband.

At twenty he was an idealist, and to him She was Rosetti's Beatrice incarnate because of the pallor of her fine skin, the mystery in her half-closed eyes and parted lips, her spiritual air, and constant dreaming as of faraway, celestial things—

At twenty-five he became an ascetic. And now She seemed to him one of the Dürer madonnas who live in austere sadness under the shadow of the Cross, a mystic flower, a chaste saint whose pale blue eyes reflected a melancholy heaven, whose flesh was but the veil of her soul, and whose lips knew the divine secret of martyrs' smiles—

At thirty he grew into a sensualist, and She became to him the embodiment of Rubens' opulent women, ravishing, carnal, lustrous-eyed, satin-skinned, her hair a torrent of gold, her shoulders of mother-of-pearl, her beautiful lips parted always in a voluptuous smile—

At thirty-five he developed into a decadent, with a penchant for strange sins and scarlet passions. Now he discovered that She was a Da Vinci Medusa, a lurid, livid, living corpse, who symbolized all the fascination of corruption, all the allure of exotic vice, all the terrorizing loveliness of horror—

At forty he found himself a cynic. He bought a plaster cast of the Winged Victory, because She, too, he thought, had a fine figure and no head—

Now he is sixty. The Winged Victory still reigns supreme. And he remains ever a happy, faithful husband.



A FOOTNOTE FOR CRITICS

By William Drayham

FOR humility and poverty, in themselves, the world has little liking and less respect. In the folk-lore of all races, despite the sentimentalization of abasement for dramatic effect, it is always power and grandeur that count in the end. The whole point of the story of Cinderella, the most widely and constantly charming of all stories, is that the Fairy Prince lifts Cinderella above her cruel sisters and stepmother, and so enables her to lord it over them. The same idea underlies practically all other folk-stories: the essence of each of them lies in the ultimate triumph and exaltation of its protagonist. And of the real men and women of history, the most venerated and envied are those

whose early humiliations were but preludes to terminal glories: for example, Lincoln, Whittington, Franklin, Columbus, Demosthenes, Frederick the Great, Catherine, Mary of Magdala, Moses. Even the Man of Sorrows, cradled in a manger and done to death between two thieves, is seen, as we part from Him at last, in a situation of stupendous magnificence, with infinite power in His hands. Even the Beatitudes, in the midst of their eloquent counselling of renunciation, give it unimaginable splendor as its reward. The meek shall inherit—what? The whole earth! And the poor in spirit? They shall sit upon the right hand of God! . . .



TODAY'S LESSON

By W. L. D. Bell

A TREMBLING young reporter stood in the presence of an eminent city editor. "If I write this story," said the reporter, "it will rob a woman of her good name."

"If you don't write it," said the city editor, "I will give you a kick in the pantaloons."

Next day the young reporter got a raise in salary and the woman swallowed two ounces of permanganate of potassium.

MORAL: Blessed are the pure in heart.



A WOMAN who declares that a great love will justify anything usually needs a good deal of justification.



IN the game of love the man is the board, the chessmen and the stake.

CUMMINGS' SATISFACTORY MORNING

By Harold de Polo

GODWIN CUMMINGS carefully crossed his legs and saw that his knees were so placed as not to bag his trousers, for he was of fairly portly build and this was a matter to be kept constantly in mind. Apparently satisfied that he had done as much as possible, he leaned further back into the soft leather of the divan skirting the darkest corner of the club foyer. Slowly he raised his high-ball, managing this, too, cautiously, importantly, making of it, as he did with nearly his every word and action, quite an event. He clinked the ice delicately against the sides, listening intently to the rhythmic tinkle; held it up, cocking one eye and surveying the light amber speculatively; and then very deliberately he allowed himself to enjoy the virgin sip. Setting it down, he hunched the shoulders of his coat to a more comfortable angle and slid down a trifle. Then, seeming to be quite ready for the business at hand, he carefully extracted his wallet and pulled out the letter from Anstruthers to his wife. For at least the dozenth time that day he eyed it, stonily, impassively, only his eyes that were of a too-light blue blinking at regular intervals:

Dearest Gwen:

Although you partly must, you can't entirely realize how happy you've made me by finally deciding to be sensible and start out on a new and gorgeous life with me. It will be wonderful, as you say, and thank God that you've at last seen it; for we were truly made for one another, you and I! Soon, dear, amid new scenes and countries you'll quite forget your nightmare of a life with Cummings—fat, blatant, stupid

beast! How you ever came to marry him I don't know—but there, you don't like my speaking of it, I'm well aware.

This has to be very short, Gwen, for I've so much to do here settling a few boresome business matters before we leave. I reach town early in the morning and will immediately, as we have agreed, secure a suite on the Monarchia. It sails the day after to-morrow, as you know. On reaching town, it is imperative that I go to my college club, for as we expect to be away so long I have a few things that must be done. However, I'll call you up from there and let you know what time I'll get up with the car. Then we can have a spin and settle definitely just where and how we are to meet the next day!

Again, dearest, let me tell you how joyous you've made me. And don't worry about the scandal and things. Cummings will probably get a divorce immediately—or in a few months or so—and then we can marry. Anyway, to protect you, Gwen, you know that I insist on settling a comfortable amount on you in case anything should happen to me before we marry. In fact, I'm going to see my lawyers about it early to-morrow.

Well, dearest, good-bye for the moment. Have you been a good girl and not flirted with that handsome young Blair? Gad, but the chap gave me many a scare, hanged pauper, for I always thought that you looked so favorably on him. But it's mean of me to speak of that now, isn't it?

Until to-morrow, sweet!

Ever your own,

DEX.

Cummings finished the letter, calmly folded it, and replaced it in his wallet. He blinked, owlishly, in the way his wife averred to detest. Again he sipped his highball, with all the little pertaining habits, and set it down. He murmured a few soft words to himself—another characteristic his wife protested to abhor—as if no more than expressing his idea of the state of the weather:

"Rotten poor letter—awfully sloppy and foolish!" . . .

He smiled. Fat, blatant, stupid beast, eh? Settling a comfortable amount on her, eh? Had been jealous—and still really was—of young Blair, eh? . . . Ummm; those last two things fitted in pretty nicely—*pretty nicely!* . . . Thank his lucky Gods that Gwen had dropped the letter—and that he had found it first. Fool woman. If she'd only *burned* it, as he'd so many times preached should be done with *all* letters, this thing couldn't have happened. No—and he was forced to smile again—if she'd paid more attention to what she termed his "tedious concern about unimportant things," she might be far happier in a day or two! . . .

Gently he pulled out his watch, characteristically rubbing the surface of the glass, playing with the stem, holding it to his ear, before learning the hour. Ten o'clock. Jove, but he was out early—horribly early. He yawned. Oh, well, he had to see Dexter Anstruthers, and he had mentioned, in that interesting letter, surely being at the club early. Decidedly it was time for him to show up—most decidedly. Meanwhile, he continued sipping his Scotch and settling himself more comfortably.

Almost on the point of exhibiting weariness in public, Cummings saw—heard, rather—the prospective pilferer of his lawful wife enter the club. Yes, heard him; that was it. He always created at least a ripple, even on entering the most crowded room. He seemed to come with a rush, his head high, his cheeks glowing, his eyes snapping, his lips smiling—dominant, strident youth

that insisted, unconsciously, on crying out its sheer vitality.

Godwin Cummings leaned still further back and raised his voice, to a nicety, exactly as much as was necessary:

"Oh, Dex! Just a moment, please!"

The younger man turned, at first failing to mask the innate dislike which suddenly crept over his slightly immature face. He reddened and smiled:

"Lo Goddy. How are things? In a deuce of a hurry—anything special?"

Cummings, blinking, waited until the other was abreast of him.

"Yes, I did want to see you rather keenly. Awfully sorry you're so hurried. But—but couldn't you spare me just ten minutes, as a special favor? I *did* want to talk with you; I—" his voice went intensely quiet and serious. "I *did* want your advice about something that's—oh, that's very much to me! I feel as if I have to speak to someone; to let out the hell that's in me! I know that you can be trusted, Dex!" He finished simply, sadly.

Godwin, with his head lowered, possibly did not see the expression of annoyance on the younger man's face; neither, perhaps, did the latter see the vestige of a smile on the older man's lips. An imperceptible sigh escaped Anstruthers and he flung himself down beside Cummings, his voice studiously concerned:

"Well, well. What's the trouble, old man?"

Again—and this time he seemed to deliberately take longer—Cummings went through the business of sipping his Scotch, also of insisting on Dexter joining him. He blinked, cleared his throat, felt the knot of his cravat, eyed the tips of his boots—and finally spoke:

"It's about—about Gwen!" He paused, sepulchral.

The other was startled, but managed to avert his head and trace the pattern of the rug with his boots:

"Yes, yes?" he asked.

Godwin frowned, as if searching for something in his brain. "Yes' it's about Gwen, Dex. It's—pretty bad! . . .

It's a crippling blow; a thing that's nearly sent me out of my mind, God knows! . . . And to think of Gwen—Gwen!"

Anstruthers had paled, drawing in his lips. Then, like a man believing disaster to surely be ahead and wishing to get it over with, he spoke almost brusquely:

"What's the trouble, Goddy?"

Cummings was slow to speak, and when he did, the question was not directly answered:

"Dex, I haven't been such a bad sort of a husband, have I? I'm not such a bad sort of chap, either, however you take it! I've always done my mightiest for Gwen: given her everything I possibly could in the way of money and her own freedom to do about as she wished. Of course, Dex, I haven't the fabulous income from several millions that you possess—or that a few others of the set have—but, on the whole, I'm passably well supplied with this world's goods. I'm simply dwelling on this to show that Gwen could have found no real fault there. What is it, then? Possibly I'm not such an Adonis as Blair, or—oh, or you—but I've always been devoted to her, always been faithful, always done all in the world I could, as I said before. Yes, take it all in all, old man, won't you agree with me that I've been a pretty decent sort of husband?"

He raised his head and looked innocently at Anstruthers, the personification of grieved, imploring hurt. His big, blue eyes—some had called them fishy—looked straight into the others.

Dexter's face had whitened, the neck muscles swelling with suppressed emotion. He was silent, cursing Godwin heartily and fervently for drawing him into this disagreeable interview. Bore, what in the deuce was he really getting at? *Had* he discovered that letter?

Cummings' voice continued softly, almost whiningly: "Well, Dex, *haven't* I been a decent sort?"

Anstruthers started. "What? . . . Oh! Why, yes, Goddy—yes, by Jove,

you have!" Dawn him, he *was* playing with him!

"Yes," reiterated Cummings, "I have—by George, but I have, there's no saying I haven't!" Whimperingly, he added: "But Gwen doesn't think so, Dex—God knows *she* doesn't! She—she's mad about another man—absolutely raving mad! I don't know why I'm telling you this, old man, but I said in the beginning that I *had* to talk—and I can trust *you*—and—and I want to know what you'd do in my case? It's only recently that I've learned the thing—within the last twenty-four hours, in fact—and it's hard, Dex, hard!"

He blinked at the younger man, his rather rotund, pink, close-shaved face looking so sad that it would have struck Anstruthers as inexpressibly funny under any other conditions. Now, though, he wanted to send his fist crashing against that sleek jaw in payment for being toyed with.

The dragging voice continued: "Dex, you'd never guess who it was. It's come as the greatest surprise in the world. The chap's my friend; one I've trusted, one I've liked, one who's been welcome to my home any time he wished. He's been about a bit with Gwen, and all the while I simply thought they were just two bully good pals. Yes, old man, it's been a big surprise and a big blow. You'd never guess who it was—no, you never would!" He stopped abruptly and shook his head disconsolately.

Anstruthers thought he would go mad at this waiting. He almost bit his words out, it seemed to Cummings:

"Who—is it?"

The older man presumably did not hear him; he was shaking his head and gazing dolefully at the tip of his highly polished boot:

"No, you'd never guess—never in the world—I know it! My friend; my trusted and liked friend! The chap I thought was a jolly good pal of Gwen's; the one man in the world I'd never have connected with such a cowardly thing! . . . No, you'd never guess, Dex—you'd never guess!"

Once more he raised his head, his blue eyes bigger than ever, and blinked mournfully at Anstruthers. Behind it all, though, the latter was not *quite* sure whether or not he could discover a faint sneer—which, of course, got more than ever on his nerves. He did not answer, now, but found something on the ceiling which necessitated his earnest gaze and entire thought.

Cummings' words came in a horse whisper: "It's—Dex, it's— . . . But, Lord, you'd hardly believe it—and how it—it hurts me!" Again the head wagged hopelessly, brokenly.

The single questioning word came through the younger man's teeth like a hiss:

"Yes?"

"Dex, it's— . . . Yes, by God, it's—it's *Ernie Blair!*"

Cummings, although his head was sunken on his chest, nevertheless saw every play of expressions on his listener's face quite plainly. Anstruthers was immature. His mouth gaped, his eyes stared wildly, the color left his cheeks, and even his long fingers unconsciously doubled into taut fists. Then his jaws closed with a little click, his eyes narrowed and hardened, his face went crimson; but he immediately fumbled for a cigarette, lit it, shakily, and tried to appear sorrowfully sympathetic:

"*Blair!* Ernie Blair? . . . My—my God, old man, what is it? When—how—just what's the matter? . . . Blair—Gwen! *Gwen!* . . . Oh, I'm sorry—awfully sorry," he added, remembering his supposed role.

Still Cummings gazed at the tip of his boot. His words were bitter:

"Yes, Blair—young Ernie Blair—and I called him one of my best friends! You don't know what it's meant to me, Dex—you don't know the agony I've been through since I found out, only last night. I felt as if I *must* speak to someone—as if I *must* get it off my heart. I may be a—oh, a stupid sort of a beast for doing so, but I honestly can't help it. And you—you, old man—God knows I *can* trust!"

The other was still anxious—and

suddenly hopeful: "But what's the trouble, Goddy? I mean exactly?"

"I—heard them talking last night. It was quite by accident; never dreamed of eavesdropping. Just got the end of the—affair. Didn't quite understand it and don't make it all out even yet—but I heard enough. She was in his arms, I know, and telling him something about having him all the time in a few weeks or so. Expected to meet in Paris, where she said they were going to run off together to Italy. Spoke of having plenty of money for all their lives, doing it modestly, and being careful about not being seen on the steamer. Oh, I don't know the whole thing. It was fragmentary and mixed, but I know I heard enough, that's all. How in the devil she expected to get to Europe in a few weeks or of having enough I don't know—we weren't going abroad this year, I thought, and—"

Anstruthers cut in, his face very pale and his voice strained: "I'm sorry—hanged sorry, old man!" He gazed about pre-occupiedly.

"Thanks—thanks for listening, too, for I felt someone had to know. Blair was my friend; and Gwen—*Gwen!* . . . Oh, God, Dex—I'm broken, broken!"

"Too bad—too bad," muttered the other, dully. *He* knew what she meant by meeting Blair in Paris—damn him—and having "enough." *He* knew! . . . So that was it, eh? That was it? . . . But he must get away, any place, where he could curse himself and her and the world in general.

"Yes, I'm broken, Dex," repeated Godwin, dazedly. "For Heaven's sake, stay around and lunch with me, old man. I feel just as if I'd go to pieces and you're the kind of friend a man feels better with!"

Dexter Anstruthers, himself, also felt broken. Too suddenly for reality he sprang from the divan, glanced at his timepiece, and thrust out his hand:

"Sorry, Goddy, but I honestly can't. I—I forgot to tell you. I'd intended sailing on the *Monarchia* in the morning; but I learned, this morning, that

a new and better steamer was going out late to-day. I—think I'll take it; in fact, I'm sure. Haven't much time, you can see, to straighten things out—the few things that always crop up, you know. Sorry—awfully sorry about everything. Bye-bye!" And blindly, in a daze, he managed to rush out onto the street.

* * * * *

Godwin Cummings, left alone, seemed to regain his poise and composure with a rapidity that was most surprising; also, for once he acted almost quickly. He summoned a boy and told him to learn at what hour the *Regalia* left her dock. When the answer came that it was as near two-thirty as possible, he left the club, made for the nearest telegraph office and sent a message to his wife:

Cannot get you on telephone, something wrong with it. Greatly rushed by sudden turn of business and every second precious. Nevertheless, expect me sharply at three. I am sure you will understand.

DEX.

He smiled as he signed the name; indulging in one of his settled habits of speaking to himself in a low whisper: "Hmmm. That'll at least stop her from worrying about him and trying to hunt him up—and I rather think he won't hunt her up! . . . Lord, nearly four hours to wait—damn bore!" . . .

Precisely at three he climbed the steps of his home. He did not use his key, but with an ironic narrowing of his big, blue eyes he rang the bell—sharply, as a hurried, anxious man might.

He walked swiftly by the maid and into the library—the nearest room to the door. Yes, Gwen was there, standing by the portières, hatted and gloved. He noticed that her long, almost shrewdly cold eyes—that nevertheless had in them a compelling expression of sexual challenge—were for once softly eager. At his entrance she stepped back, idly turning the pages of a magazine as nonchalantly as she could while she greeted him. The anger, the dis-

appointment, the little bite of the under lip, did not escape him.

He looked at her evenly, unemotionally, as if he had stopped in the street and was aimlessly staring at something while waiting for a car. He did not give her a chance to speak, but came to the point at once. His voice was slow—maddeningly slow—and interspersed with occasional irritating coughs and a flicking of imaginary specks from his sleeves and cuffs—for she never had liked that, he remembered:

"Hullo! Expecting someone, eh? Seems as if he's—ah—late. Maybe forgot or—changed his mind. Ummm. Yes. Quite so! Had a bully time," he continued, apparently not noticing the puzzled look on her face. "Went all through that big, new steamship—the *Regalia*. Great; simply great. Thinking of taking a little trip in it myself—soon. Yes, quite thinking of it. Just—ah—" he blinked and his eyes went wider as an innocent smile came to his lips, "just been seeing one of the chaps off! Ah, it was Anstruthers, by the way—Dex Anstruthers!"

Gwendolyn Cummings was a good enough actress, but she could not keep her rouge from showing up against a deathly white background. Ever so slightly, her mouth hardened and her eyes narrowed. Was this some trap—had he found— . . . But she smiled, languidly:

"Really? I didn't know he expected to go this season!"

It felt like long minutes before her husband answered. "Didn't you? Not to-day, anyway! . . . I—I presume that he must have—as, must have changed his mind for some reason, since he sent you that telegram—what?" And slowly, cunningly, a cruel little smile came to his lips as his eyes narrowed and went to her soul.

She seemed to recoil, every muscle in her superb animal body drawing taut. Her eyes were raging as she stood there looking at him, her brain hot and reeling. Somehow, he had found out; somehow, he had made Dex go off alone; somehow— . . .

His slow, smooth voice that made her want to shriek and kill him came to her:

"Yes, bully boat. Thinking—no, I've about decided, I should say—of taking a little trip on her myself. Ah, *quite* by myself! . . . But I'll talk about that later—and other things, incidentally!"

And again, his face bland, his eyes big and blue and blinking, he turned and made his way out of the room, quickly.

Her little white teeth clicked and her slim fingers closed convulsively over the magazine. She flung it from her in sheer agony of nerves—for what was left?



HER LITTLE BLACK SLIPPERS

By Ezra Pound

AT the table beyond us;
With her little black slippers off;
With her little white-stockin'd feet
Carefully kept from the floor by a napkin,
She converses:

"Connaissez-vous Ostende?"

The gurgling Italian lady on the other side of the restaurant
Attempts to recall her Pekinese,

. . . . Fruitlessly

For the sombre male customer caresses it

. . . . Effusively

The gurgling Italian lady on the other side of the restaurant

Glares, grunts, and replies monosyllabically

To the remarks of the first, possibly Spanish, French product,

And I wait.

I converse with my *vis-à-vis*.

I wait with patience.

To see how she will climb back into her black suède

Bright-buckled slippers.

She re-enters them with a groan.



PESSIMISM is the recognition of other people's faults. Cynicism is the realization that they are also one's own.



AN autobiography is a book in which a man tells what he would have done if he had thought of it in time.



THE MAYSANG'S CARGO

By Frank Pease

TIO LIN, *Cap'n Chino* at Zamboanga, owned the *Maysang*. Not much of a steamer even as steamers go in those parts. Just a creaky, clanky, smelly, six-knot tub of inter-island traffic; a stuffy ill-kempt scavenger of trade; always tardy, always in bad repute, always darkly secretive in her labored drift across the somnolent tides of Archipelagan life. She was as anonymous as rumor: quite as untrustworthy. At any Port Master's office the curious could find her registry, in spite of which she kept herself a thing unknown, veiled in an impenetrable silence, shrouded with obscurity, gloomy on the brightest day as though violence or fear, treachery or revenge, some deadly foe to health, truth, honor, something aloof, forbidding, ultimate, brooded aboard this distrusted snatch of flotsam adrift on seas that themselves became suspect once she had crossed them. Unheralded, she was here to-day, there to-morrow, gone without a word as it were, the ways and whys of her furtive life beyond the reckoning of any but her half-caste crew, her owner and certain personages never clearly limned upon and still obscured to memory. Everyone, even the port clerks who scribbled her clearances, felt the *Maysang's* forbidding mystery.

Soiled and greasy and sun-worn, a loathsome crust of scum belting her water-line, a craft ugly and black and thick-set beyond the point of decency in an honest ship, every feature of the *Maysang* strove to confirm the bad name she bore. No maritime eye but flinched at the stunted height of her spars, her shortened funnel. the

chopped-off effect of her squat pilot house and cabin, all of her crouched low as if to duck the conspicuous danger of clear sky lines. A sullen ominous craft: a hard case from her looks.

Usually she was burdened with commonplace South Sea cargoes. Bulked high along her scarred rails, spewing out from her dirty hold—she was always overloaded—scattered in a confusion of hills and hummocks about her deck, were bales of hemp, miscellaneous tools, boxes of tinned goods, cases of petroleum, steel cables, great coils of new rope, and, far forward, grouped round the winches, were fighting birds: each in the carefully caged protection of a woven bamboo crate: each flunkied and watched over by a crew criminally careless of other cargo, yet never forgetting these bright-plumaged fowl of chance. Sometimes—and this was what had first branded the *Maysang* with the sombre gangrene of suspicion—sometimes, ingeniously lashed close to her gangways, ready for an instant's thrust overboard at the quick blow of a deck-axe, were boxes; long, nearly foot-square things, solidly built, heavy as lead, unmarked, unnamed, unwhispered. Guns.

But that was before Tio Lin bid her in at her forced auction up at Cavite where she had been interned for a long time, guarded and frowned upon by every naval boat and revenue cutter in Island Service. Tio Lin got her for a mere song, it was said, the evil reputation of those boxes felling the price to an absurd figure, even granting her sinister ugliness. A good-looking, prosperous, amiable man, this Tio Lin; suave in manner, not at all distant in

appearance, yet speechless to everything except authority towards which he had a gamester's fealty of fear and respect. He never freighted the *Maysang* with suspicious long boxes: he left that to fools and high-sea smugglers of whom there were plenty throughout the Archipelago or across the seas towards Singapore.

But it was scarcely sentiment which kept the *Maysang* out of the highly profitable traffic in long boxes for Tio Lin was in love with money. It was the deadening reality of that close-cropped shadeless island somewhere to the north, a repulsive and crippling spot few men visited but to stay—against their will it was said—making bricks. The last owner of the *Maysang*—he had also been her skipper—was now making bricks. Except for a few months off if the bricks and a lot of other things met requirements, he would continue to make bricks for fourteen long years.

Tio Lin knew this, just as he knew a surprising number of things no one suspected him of knowing. Also, there was not the money in a cargo of the long boxes there was in such occasional cargoes as the *Maysang* now carried: cargoes unnamed, unwhispered, as mysterious as the boxes, in their own way quite an dangerous, but bringing more money in one trip than common trade goods or even the boxes had ever brought in half a year. Still, Tio Lin, because he was like the rest of mankind in love with money, had the *Maysang* continue to carry trade goods between whiles. Further, they were a good mask.

These occasional cargoes the *Maysang* carried after Tio Lin bought her, whether they sought him out, or whether one of his many irons in the fire of trade had thrown a dull gleam through some darkened underway of the East pointing the money there was in such cargoes, no one knew. Or if there were men who knew, none told. Certainly it was a brand of goods that met wondrous felicitude on its landing. Inquisitory port officials were carefully

absent when, after crouching low upon the outer slope of the horizon waiting for darkness, the *Maysang* stole in, chose an anchorage safely distanced off shore, and with hasty secrecy unloaded one of those mysterious cargoes. There were good wharves in every sizable port along these inland seas since the Americans had come, but the *Maysang* never used them. Doubtless she knew what she was about: but she never told, never a word.

An amiable man with a scuffling haste of respect for authority, Tio Lin occasionally accommodated the port owners by taking soldiers aboard the *Maysang* on some hurried rush to a fighting zone. This was not often; for the Army has its own transports, and its own sailing schedules. But life—fighting life in the tropics—is no geometrical affair of policed and passionless cities: time-tabled, sign-posted, guided and guarded and hustled into orderly automatism. Sullen tides of revolt that refused to recede, wild undercurrents of hatred churning to blood-crested waves at some lone outpost and leaving but a grim and macerated memory, crowds of armed men, naked, savage and wily, invading even the martial and monotonous inertia of walled towns—in such startling but never unexpected occurrences the *Maysang* was useful. Gradually she crept closer to that magic protection with which power—if so it wills—can cloak even the scurviest.

The *Maysang* bred strange things in a man were he some lone trooper en route to an obscure post, above all a hungry gregariousness which gave rise to an irreducible vision of that reality behind the symbolism of a flag. But she could breed much else: fear, suspicion, loathing, the cold and penetrating pain of solitude, and always the hatred of her was linked with a blind and poignant longing for one's own kind.

Such a passenger might board the *Maysang*, overjoyed to get away. A miserable craft, this *Maysang*, still a boat, a sea trip. They look back upon the ports in that part of the world—

though what they seek no man has yet said. He too looks back. Of a sudden it has vanished: puffed out like smoke: gone. It didn't sink from sight slowly as places do elsewhere. It just evanesced. Now he is alone, a single white man amongst a squalid and barbarous crew who might . . . one never knows.

He picks his way through the tangle along her deck, making forward in hopes he'll see something. When he gets forward there's nothing to see. There is not even a patch from that eternal monotony of tropic green he is accustomed to; not a sail, not a cloud, not a movement except the puissant push of the tub through a sea as oily and lifeless and metal-smooth as a disk of engine-room steel; the only sounds that monotonous puff and wheeze and groan and clank from the *Maysang's* antiquated engine. Nothing: only an endless shimmer of brassy sea, steeped in a wilt of noonday, formidable in its very lifelessness, bland in its disdain, maddening, a vast unwinking demoniac eye rolling through space, and over whose high lids the *Maysang* is forever climbing.

Already he wishes himself ashore, but the slow suspense of her speed will keep him a whole week likely. The days fall, each as the other; brazen sea; hazy sky; unattainable horizon; engine noises; guttural and clamorous tongues; the surreptitious slip-slap of bare or slippered feet along her deck; the ratty knock and scrape of rudder chains; and not enough breeze to lose the stinky, oily, coaly bilge-water breath of her that clings forward and aft and midship, clogs his nostrils, sticks in his throat, and smarts his eyes with tiny stinging bits of cinder from her squat stack. Her iron deck is cluttered, dirty, hot. The only shade is right 'longside that foul engine-room grating, the smell from which turns his stomach. More than likely the tobacco has run out . . . he feels it a sullen unsocial crew and would never ask. . . . There's no place to go nor sit nor stand nor walk. There's nothing to do nor undo. Why don't that damned *Kanaka* skipper put

some speed on her? We'll never get anywhere at this rate. Don't that old *Chino* cook ever wash himself—the dirty dog! He'd take a crack at him if he wasn't the only white man on board, and he didn't have to watch that confounded iron box of Civil Government Conant they sent along with him.

That was the *Maysang*: her days drunken with smells and glare and clanks and hunger to look at a white man; her night's sleep-robbed by gaunt grisly creatures who clamber over the rail with crinkly *kriss* in their teeth, ferocious yells, wild rushes on that iron box which end with a jab in the ribs from one of those crinkly *kriss*—and the lone trooper rolls over to find a shell has worked loose in his belt and is prodding his belly; and that his hip bone is bent in from lying on a bolt-head of the iron deck.

After five or six or seven or eight of such eternities, the *Maysang* finds some narrow passage between islands that have at last usurped the horizon. For a long while she grapples with sullen tides that gnaw upon these lands with a movement impalpable and sinuous, covert and powerful like the secret and toothless mouthing of time. Finally she breasts through to some hidden palm-walled harbor. High above the wall of green crowning a glare of sand appears a flash of color, a tiny cluster of red white and blue petals blossoming on a high stalk—the Flag. His thirsty eyes soak up every hint of its stripes and stars. He had never known what the flag meant before. Now he can laugh at the *Maysang*—bestly prison of the week gone; though his laugh may change to an unsung sob, so ineffably dear has that wilt of color become to him. The *Maysang* has shown him something: the Great Idea behind that flag; taught him its subtlest significance; its finest and most ultimate meaning—Kinship.

But there were never lone passengers or groups aboard the *Maysang* on her trips with the mysterious cargo. And never a hint would such passengers get of what those cargoes were; unless the

merest suggestion of a not unpleasant odor still clung somewhere about her. The *Maysang* guarded her secret with unassailable cunning.

Some there were who—had they known of the *Maysang's* cargoes, which they did not, and which everyone connected with the *Maysang* took great care they should not—would have declared her to be freighted with Evil itself; cargoes with writhing demons; spiritual scorpions; furtive and foul machinations of the dark designed to wreak sinister and slavish doom on all who used her cargo. Others—had they known, which likewise they did not, being content to accept all things, inquiring little—would have laughed aloud, anticipating much. If such could have put their feelings into words they would have declared the *Maysang* carried cargoes of pure joy, lilting music, vintages of ecstasy, balm and healing and repose for souls wounded or wearied or vacant. They would have told of soft mirrors in which they heard the white melody of temples; sensed a whispering flow of god-like colors; achieved the supernal contentment of beauty; felt the strange sentiency of finger-tips caressing the plush flame of rainbows; quaffed the vague and lethal perfumes of hidden valleys; and always with a swift levitational escape from the burden of time. And others still would have pursed thin lips; said nothing; but tinged their sneers with lofty and benevolent contempt: such being the variety of man's thoughts—and masks.

Whatever the *Maysang* carried on those furtive windings through a thousand byways of Eastern traffic, picking her slow course with the ominous dignity of dishonor, it was a lucrative freightage for Tio Lin. Ever he amassed more money; drawing always closer to the subterranean confidence of the powers; in a hundred ways using this confidence to gather more money. His position grew with his money. He became more respected; influential; predatory. One could see he was destined to much of success and power.

The *Maysang* was a good investment.

No man could tell the number of the *Maysang's* trips or the amount of her cargo, unless it were Tio Lin, and he never so much as hinted, but wrapped himself in his customary mantle of secrecy; never anxious; never open; always watchful; his penetrating eyes peering with predacious clarity lest the least last item of this mysterious traffic escape him.

Perhaps even Tio Lin, crafty, keensighted man he was, could not have told all that trailed in the evil wake of the *Maysang*. Perhaps no man could have told. For what sight is vast enough to embrace the perspective of that anonymous ebb and flow of Eastern living? Who or what could fathom the variegated shuffle of human pawns across her wearied and immemorial checkerboard of fate; the incessant comings and goings of a folk masked in the secrecy of numbers; voiceless; immobile; occult; pressing against the barriers of their ancient and unknown future with the blind sadness of duration; an individual, a group of individuals, a race, lost, and not a murmur to stir those imponderable deeps? How follow the *Maysang*—insignificant fleck of evil—as she crossed and recrossed, that glittering and titanic eye forever staring at space, as indifferent to the *Maysang* and her cargo as to the streaming of time?

Perhaps the *Maysang* would still drag and dodge and shuffle along those hidden lanes of the East had not that forbidding foe to health, truth, honor, brooding aboard her so long and so unconfessed, crawled forth from her black hold, loosed itself from her to stride abroad in the full light of day; shameless, awful, deadly, through all the ports which used the *Maysang's* cargo. There was trouble enough then; weeping and wailing; high-pitched calls on many and monstrous gods—and on the powers. The gods did not hear: the powers stirred themselves mightily. A great scurrying sprang up in the ports. Ringed round with armed men were sudden camps out of which fearful

smells oozed through the streets, invaded the houses, fouled the long reaches to the sea in loathsome fogs of nausea. High against purple hills beyond the ports pungent clouds of densest vapor piled heavenward: a corruption, a burning, an utter destroying, a monstrous and mortal incense to the foe. Out of the *Maysang* had come the deadliest of Eastern dangers; an ultimate and intimate evil; an enemy to all men, white, brown or yellow. It was heedless, formless, horrible; and it rifled the ports with imperial and malevolent demand.

A planter from the South Sulus sat, far out at sea, in the thatch-covered stern of a *prau*. He was a big, broad, red-faced man not yet at the middle of life, just at an age to plunge into whatever flurry of emotion the emotionless East could offer him. A successful man undoubtedly, one with money to spend; a man healthy, wide, good to look upon, self-contained, rich with the wealth of a poised and easy conscience. This was his regular bi-monthly trip north to the first large port. He was keen with anticipation.

He was dressed in white. A pan-shaped hat shaded a pleasant face and blue eyes that puckered a little in the drench of hot light pouring into his boat. A few half-naked men with rings in their ears, a wind of cloth on their hips, stirred gleaming brown limbs to tend the huge sail. There was little breeze. Ever and again the white man dozed, waking only when the boom shifted dragging a tatter of rope across the thatch.

He had need of sleep. It would be two, three, perhaps four nights before the return, and then to a sleep more of exhaustion than the easy rest of normal nights. He slept much, but not deeply, so sharp was his appetite for the town. The murmur of the men's voices, the soft purl of water whispering past, a rattle of rings on the bamboo mast, were the only sounds.

In the afternoon of the second day of his sailing a purpling of hills bulged

through the vague horizon. Yonder was the port that housed his quest. A little breeze sprang up. The ungainly *prau* quickened her sluggish speed. The mountains grew clearer. Presently the steely flash from galvanised roofs showed out of the palms through a haze of distance. The man stood up, passing a command to the crew. He stretched himself, a smile of satisfaction illumined his tanned face. Ever and again his eyes sought the steely flicker of roofs, searching for one in particular it seemed, so expectant were they.

As he drew close to the reach of reef behind and over which the port buildings now showed plainly, a powerful tug in government service passed them heading straight to sea. A long cable from her stern dragged back to a squat black steamer in lumbering tow. The white man in the *prau* looked at them questioningly. Where were they taking that old tub? The shipyards were up there to the north beyond the military hospital. Funny, there was no crew aboard. Then he made out one man, a dim figure at the wheel; not a *native* he thought, sensing this in some way he could not have told. They passed throwing out a double series of waves that tossed the *prau* in a bundle of choppy water for a moment and was gone. The man waved his white helmet to those on the tug. They did not reply.

Now he was around the reef searching the piling for a spot to tie up. Before he could do this a launch darted out approaching him swiftly. In her bow stood a white-uniformed figure. The health officer, probably, a man known to the planter. But he failed in his accustomed greeting; looked worried, depressed, even surly, the planter thought.

"Hullo—anything down your way yet?"

"Hullo yourself—anything what?"

"Why, ain't you heard? That last batch of Jap girls off'n the *Maysang* had the plague—every one of 'em. She's set up every port she made from

here to Jolo. You can't come 'shore if you want to get back this summer. We're quarantined. They're dying like flies. You'd better go back. They's hell to pay about the *Maysang*."

It was a disappointed planter who hastened south that afternoon, passing far out a ruffle of wreckage, scattered and bobbing with the chop of waves—all that was left of the dynamited *Maysang*.



HAVE THOU NO FEAR

By Seumas O'Sullivan

HAVE thou no fear, though round this heart
The winds of passion are,
The image of your love is set
Within, serene and far,
As in some lonely mountain lake
The reflex of a star.

But deeper than the deepest lake
And stiller than its deep
Is your immortal image set,
And round it, steep on steep,
Like guardians, peace enturreted,
The winds of passion sleep.



HEAVEN deserves to be more fashionable than it is. It has the merit of exclusiveness.



THE man who tries to kiss a woman, and fails, deserves the pitying smile with which she ever afterwards greets his name.



WISDOM is a taste that requires time to acquire. All young men fall in love.



LA VENGEANCE DE MICHU

By Emile Delta

SOUS les vertes frondaisons des grands arbres, pendant que le soleil déverse en poussière d'or ses rayons à travers les branches, un homme est assis, immobile, au bord du fossé, le regard vague, indifférent aux charmes de ce beau soir d'été.

Ses vêtements sont d'une couleur rendue méconnaissable par l'usure; sa chemise en lambeaux laisse entrevoir une peau brunâtre et velue, tandis qu'un chapeau de jonc troué cache mal une tête fruste, à la chevelure épaisse et longue qui encadre, hirsute, un visage farouche et sinistre.

Une hute de branchages édifiée au fond de la forêt qu'il aime, l'abrite contre les intempéries des saisons. Le reste du temps il dort comme un bienheureux, dans un coin quelconque des taillis qui lui sont familiers.

Cet être, c'est Michue, l'homme des bois!... l'homme libre!...

Il fuit ses semblables et vit, de même que ses aïeux des temps primitifs, du produit de ses chasses.

Car, il chasse tous les jours, l'été comme l'hiver, en période prohibée ou non; peu lui importe nos lois!

Il vit sans souci.

Pourtant, cet être inoffensif a un ennemi.

Frédéric, le garde-chasse du comte Aldebert, déteste Michu. Il hait, et il craint aussi, cet être descendant des singes plutôt que des hommes, féroce destructeur du gibier, poils et plumes, du domaine de la Cerisaie.

Ce diable de Michu éventa, dépiste et fait pitoyablement échouer tous les trucs ingénieux qu'il imagine, lui, Frédéric, afin d'être agréable au châtelain, son maître. Michu arrive con-

stamment bon premier; c'est pourquoi le braconnier est devenu la bête noire du garde, qui a bien juré de se venger; — sans que Michu sache, toutefois, qui l'aura trahieusement frappé.

Michu est, de son côté, merveilleusement secondé dans son existence de rapines par un vaillant camarade, son seul ami: un chien maigre et osseux, de race mal définie, moitié loup, moitié chien, répondant au nom bien porté de Sauvage.

L'homme et l'animal, légendaires dans le pays, vivent en bonne intelligence, tous deux fort indifférents aux histoires émises sur leur compte.

II

Ce soir-là, par extraordinaire, Sauvage manqua l'heure de l'appel...

En vain, Michu le siffle, puis attend; Sauvage ne répond point.

Inquiet, Michu part le lendemain, dès l'aube, appelant toujours, quand les cris de gamins retiennent son attention.

Michu s'approche... Malédiction!

Un juron formidable est répété par les échos de la forêt; les enfants, épouvantés, s'enfuient.

L'un d'eux, moins alerte, ne détale pas assez vite.

De sa lourde main velue, Michu le saisit au collet et l'immobilise, terrifié, sur place.

— Qui a fait cela? le diras-tu, canaille? Que a fait cela? m'entends-tu?

De sa main restée libre, Michu, l'œil hagard, désigne le cadavre efflanqué de Sauvage, qui se balance pendu à une branche.

— C'est pas moi... c'est le garde.

— Frédéric?... Tu en es sûr?

— Le gas Louis l'a vu faire; il nous

l'a dit; c'est pour ça que nous sommes venus...

Michu lâche prise.

— Bon, va-t-en!

Prenant ses jambes à son cou, le gamin déguerpit.

Resté seul, Michu coupe la corde.

De grosses larmes roulent sur sa barbe inculte pendant que, machinalement, sa main caresse la tête de l'animal mort...

...Au milieu d'un épais fourré, il enterra Sauvage. Hébété, il reprit ensuite le chemin de sa cabane...

III

L'air plus sombre, l'aspect plus farouche, Michu continue de vivre sa vie errante et vagabonde.

Plusieurs fois, il a croisé le garde, qui tremble dans sa peau, en songeant à la "saleté" commise et aux représailles qui pourront en résulter. Pourtant, ressuré par le regard morne qui a rencontré le sien, sa méfiance a disparu.

C'est donc tranquille que Frédéric s'avance vers la fosse profonde savamment dissimulée sous des branchages, dans laquelle tombera vivant un sanglier mâle, qu'il sait devoir passer par là.

Michu a vu creuser cette fosse; il en connaît l'usage. Et Michu s'est tapi, invisible, dans le broussaillier...

Le garde s'approche ensifflottant victorieusement un air de chasse.

La bête est prise: il l'entend.

Elle donne de furieux coups de bouts dans les parois de son étroite prison.

Le fusil en mains, un doigt sur la détente, le garde considère le superbe animal; il suppute la récompense que ne manquera pas de lui verser le vicomte!

Dans sa joie, il parle à voix haute:

— Cette fois, mon vieux, tu n'y échapperas pas; il y a assez longtemps que je te tiens à l'œil!

— Moi aussi, brigand, je te tenais à l'œil!... gronde soudain une voix.

Jeté brusquement sur le sol, le garde roule jusqu'au bord de la fosse.

Michu—c'est lui—désarme son ennemi. D'un vigoureux coup de pied, il le pousse, implacable, dans le trou au sanglier.

Un horrible cri d'épouvante, une lutte atroce, de quelques minutes à peine; un bruit d'os heurtés, brisés; des gémissements...

Puis les grognements sourds du fauve repu de sang et de chair...

Impassible, Michu considère la scène atroce.

Sa vengeance est accomplie!

Alors, à travers les halliers, du pas lourd de la brute satisfaite, il s'éloigne sous les vertes frondaisons des grands arbres, tandis que le soleil déverse en poussière d'or ses rayons à travers les branches.



***L** A femme ne peut être savante impunément qu'à la charge de cacher ce qu'elle.*



***A'** IDOS de mi casa, y, Qué quereis con mi mujer, no hay responder.*



IGOTASISTERLENA

By George Jean Nathan

HAVING, for some time past, been subject to a notion that my periodic allusions to vaudeville may, after all, have been slightly too acescent—that possibly the thing had improved and was no longer the snide numskullery it once had been—I lately discharged the required fee and took roost upon a seat in the cardinal vaudeville hall of the metropolis. Imagine my surprise when I discovered—I may as well confess it forthwith and frankly—that I had, in truth, been mistaken; that I had been out of touch with the vaudevilles for a sufficient term to render my remarks at once inappropriate and unfair; that, in short, I had stated the case against vaudeville from the plane of a too ancient prejudice. For I found that vaudeville, judging it from the exposition thereof on its principal New York stage, is not only not so bad as I in my sciolism and ignorance had believed it to be, but that it is a blamed sight worse.

The arterio-sclerosis, the vacuity and the stupidity of this species of professional entertainment is beyond the comprehension of even the assiduous customer of the Broadway drama. Burlesque, beside it, is a high art. And Broadway drama of the typical sort in which the hero is unable to prove an alibi and clear himself of the charge of murder because on the night in question he was with Madame Purée de Saint Germain and chivalrously declines to compromise that lady, is a product of God-given genius.

By way of emphasizing the impartiality and the gospel of the foregoing paragraphs and dismissing at once the allegation that I am constitutionally in-

competent to judge vaudeville—an allegation eminently true—I shall remove the personal element from a consideration of what took place that evening upon the platform, shall set down simply the facts, and shall so permit the reader to compose his mind for himself.

When we entered the hall, the first three numbers on the bill—always the weakest numbers on a vaudeville program, according to the vaudeville purveyors' own code and testimony—had already spent themselves. What followed, therefore, in the purveyors' minds and to the purveyors' intentions, must have been the strongest. The first of these strong features (headliners, I believe the designation is) to assess the vision was a so-called hobo monologist, by name, Mr. Wills. This Wills gentleman had his face smeared with bluish grease-paint and Hess' No. 8½ to suggest the need of a shave, had his person encased in exaggeratedly tattered apparel and had a couple of dozen medals pinned upon his bosom. Thus Mr. Wills: "I got some telegrams here I jist received. I'll read 'em to you. Here's one from Harry Thaw: 'The future looks black for me. I'm goin' to live in Pittsburgh!' Here's one from a friend o' mine in Rooshia: 'I saw the Tsar at the opera last night. He was in a box with his wife, the Tsardine.' Here's another one from the Austrian general Rushemoffski: 'I chased the enemy at the point of th' sw-aw-rd for three miles and, gettin' near him, I cut off his retreat.'"

After winding up with a *mot* concerning the slowness of the trains on the Erie Railroad, Mr. Wills proceeded

to relate the tale of how he had boarded a street-car which contained seven policemen and a blind man and how, upon leaving the car, he had found that one of them had robbed him of his watch. He next remarked that war preparations must certainly be going on in this country as he noticed some laborers were already digging trenches in Forty-second street and that Forty-second street was all torn up about it. Waiting patiently for the laughter at this sally to subside, the gentleman then observed that he had that afternoon gone into a saloon for a "smile," had poured out a very large drink of whiskey and had been told by the bartender that if that was a smile, he (the bartender) would have to go out of business if Mr. Wills took a laugh. When he came out of the saloon, continued Mr. Wills, he saw two ladies pass with their skirts raised above their shoe-tops. One of them had on green stockings, said Mr. Wills, and the other had on red, white and blue stockings. He did not know which one to look at, said Mr. Wills. Then, said Mr. Wills, he concluded to look at the lady with the red, white and blue stockings and so see America first. The Wills gentleman concluded with a parody on "The Rosary," which, being a jolly novelty, chaffed the Ford automobiles.

Following Mr. Wills, came one of "society's favorite dancers," a Miss B. Glass, and with her a collaborative colleague in the shape of a Mons. Rodolph in a dress-suit with a large artificial gardenia in his buttonhole and patent-leather hair. Mons. and his partner first negotiated a waltz in a migratory spotlight, next a military gavotte diligently patterned after a similar dance in one of last season's musical comedies and concluded with what the playbill described as "Miss Glass' revival of the cake-walk," but which seemed to be more revival than cake-walk. After the period provided for recovery and known in theatrical parlance as the intermission, a couple of gentlemen in evening clothes became visible. Following some stepping of the familiar

kind, one of the team remarked that he was going across the street to buy a box of cigarettes. This left the first gentleman free for a *pas seul*. Then the second gentleman returned. "Let's make a night of it," proposed the first gentleman. Whereupon (music cue) and the second gentleman something after this fashion:

No more bright lights fer me,
No more gay life fer me,
I gotta home in the country sweet,
I gotta wife that's fine and neat,
I gotta boy—he's just so high—
He is the apple of my eye,
They are waitin' at home fer me,
They are waitin' to greet but me.
You can have your bright lights,
Oh, those Broadway night lights,
But my wife and my kiddie fer me!

Upon the applause, the gentlemen reappeared at the right of the stage, locked arms, tipped each other's hats, twined arms quickly back and readjusted hats upon each other's heads—and lock-stepped off.

Next, what the program announced as a melodramatic sketch. A young man, it appeared, had stolen money from the bank. "Gosh all hemlock!" ejaculated a "rube" character, supposed to be a director of the institution, "I doan't see why. I've watched that there boy sence he wuz knee-high to a grass-hopper and I doan't understand it no-how!" Entered a sputtering "German" character, also supposed to be a director. "Mein Gott, iss de bank boosted?" Entered an old deaf character, also supposed to be a director. "Good morning," said the rube character to the deaf character. "Eh?" asked the deaf character, placing his hand to his ear. "Good morning," repeated the rube character. "Eh?" asked the deaf character. And so on *forte*, *piu forte*, *fortissimo*, *fortississimo*, until—. "Aw, sit down!"

The young man was called in. "Why, oh why, did you do it?" Pause. Then—"I'll tell you why I did it! I did it because my wife and my baby were starving—yes, *starving*! You didn't pay me a living wage and—and—I had a *right*

to the money!" Entered wife. "He didn't mean to take it; did you, Dick? Here's the money. He didn't mean to keep it, he didn't mean. . ." The young man stood in the corner, head down, his fingers toying nervously with the brim of his hat. He now grasped his wife in his arms. "It'll be all right, dear, it'll be all right. Don't worry I'll take care of you and the baby, so help me God I will."

"Mein Gott, der bank is saved!" ejaculated the German character.

"Eh?" inquired the deaf character, placing his hand to his ear.

"And the boy's salary—the salary that wuz wrongfully kept from him—amountin' to \$4500, shall be given to him at once. I knew him, gosh all hemlock, sence he wuz knee-high to a grasshopper and I knew he wuz all right!" exclaimed the rube character.

And, so, curtain.

Now—"Vaudeville's Pet Singer," one Miss La Rue Dresses By Hickson. At the left, professor at the piano. At the right, gilt chair. In the centre, spotlight. In the centre of the spotlight in the centre, the thrush. A comely person in all directions save the larynx. A likely shepherdess in all avenues save the pipes. The lady's coup: "My Leetell Gray Home in the West."

And then—the sound of mechanical birdies singing behind the drop. And then—soft lights and low. And then—Harold Bell Mendelssohn's "Spring Song" from the union. And then—up the curtain and *voilà*: "The Six Diving Lilies." Six damsels in polychromatic Oluses. Six damsels reclining languorously in a pink and yellow woodland dell. Six damsels, one after the other, performing natatorial *roulades*, *follicle di spagna* and such like anchovies. And the six selfsame damsels who were visible in the days before advanced vaudeville for one dime at the Marcus Loew moving-picture depots!

There, in full, the evidence. The jury will now kindly pass out. One thing, however, seems certain. Vaudeville has advanced—in prices.

The last theatrical season was inaugurated at the Maxine Elliott Theater with seven hells, two damns, one good-NIGHT, a disrobing scene, an irate policeman of the line who was placated and put in good humour by being called sergeant, a loud-voiced amazon who invaded the premises determined to find her missing husband, a male character who was in distress because his pants had been stolen, a baffled attempt to get away via the fire-escape—in short, by something that they call a farce. This farce bore the caption "Apartment 12K" and was the manufacture of M. Lawrence Rising.

The present theatrical season has been inaugurated at the Thirty-ninth Street Theater (a couple of doors westward from the Maxine Elliott Theater) with seven hells, two damns, one good-NIGHT, a disrobing scene, an irate policeman of the line who is placated and put in good humour by being called sergeant, a loud-voiced amazon who invades the premises determined to find her missing husband, a male character who is in distress because his pants have been stolen, a baffled attempt to get away via the fire-escape—in short, by something that they call a farce. This year's edition bears the caption "The Last Laugh" and is the manufacture of MM. Dickey and Goddard.

The word "farce" is hired by the quartermasters of stage provisions to serve many singular jobs. In England, for example, the word is used to designate any piece containing a squirting soda-siphon, a stamping by one character on another's corn, a man with a gouty foot who accidentally stamps upon that foot and then hops around in pain, a character who gives another character a lusty whack on the back, a fainting woman, a surly old admiral and an irascible old colonel, the mispronunciation of a character's name to provoke laughter, an attempt on the part of a male character to sneak out of the room on tiptoe and with long strides—and the calling back of the character just as he imagines he is safely at the door, a militant suffragette in a black and white

checked skirt and a grotesque waiter. In France, for instance, the word is engaged to act as a passport for any exhibit containing a bed and a character representing an actress. And in America, in addition to being used as a trademark for a piece containing the ingredients mentioned in the Maxine Elliott-Thirty-ninth Street Theater paragraphs, the word is applied generally to any affair embracing in its script the ordering of everything on the menu with "and a cup of coffee," a crescendo repetition of the command to sit down, the tapping of the forehead with the remark, "Nobody home," the remarks "Parlez vous Deutsch" and "Sprechen Sie Français," a drunken male character who gets into the wrong boudoir by mistake, the hiding of a fat character under the piano (in which position the character presently finds that he is stuck and from which he is unable to extricate himself), the secret-ing of a character in a clothes-hamper, and a male actor in a lady's night-dress.

These then are, in the main, the devices and stratagems whereby the caterers hope to brew merriment in the proletarian tummy. And most often, the devices and stratagems are, in this purpose, eminently successful. For if there is one thing more downright uproarious and rib-poking to the every-day yokel than an enormous clatter off-stage, supposed to suggest a character falling down stairs, I am sure I don't know what it is—unless it's the joke about the goat that had its nose cut off and now how does it smell question mark, dash, awful.

Messrs. Dickey and Goddard have disclosed themselves in "The Misleading Lady" and "The Ghost Breaker" to be apt fellows in the trick mechanics of the popular show. True, their work has the mien of the college-boy masque, yet at the same time it has about it much of the quickness and freshness that such undergraduate compositions not infrequently reveal. But, slowly and certainly, with its characteristic deadly precision, the Broadway taint

would appear to be invading the young men's labours. The sparkle these labours originally promised is fast disappearing under the hypnotic and sinister pupil of their Broadway cicerones.

In "The Last Laugh," the collaborators have endeavoured to burlesque the old Frankenstein legend. A surgeon who seeks to create life, another surgeon who seeks to cajole him by substituting a chauffeur for the lifeless figure, etc. But, though this the substratum of their adventure, the playwrights have engorged and supersaturated what of available genuine farce might repose in it with such stage platitudes as I have hereinbefore sought to indicate. What Messrs. D. and G. have composed is, after all, less a poor three-act farce than a good one-reel moving picture.

* * *

The theme of Messrs. Winchell Smith's and Victor Mapes' play, "The Boomerang," with which Mr. David Belasco has opened his theater for the season of 1915-1916, captivates my fancy so irresistibly and appeals to me so strongly that I employed it in a story entitled "D. S. W." which was printed in this magazine something like a year ago. If you are of that discriminating class which monthly noses my modest labours, you may recall that the tale in point sought to relate the adventures of a so-termed "doctor of the science of wooing" coincident with his bringing about a happy union twixt one of his love-sick patients and a recalcitrant suitor, the skepticism as to the efficacy of the love-doctor's methods on the part of the patient's male parent, and the eventual boomeranging of the latter by the very methods at which he had so airily sniffed. In the tale, as a revisit among pages 7 to 16 inc. of Vol. XLIV, No. 3, of THE SMART SET will re-suggest, love was dealt with by the physician as a concrete science, or game, which had to be studied out and maneuvered with cunning, patience and caution in order satisfactorily to achieve the desired result. In the Smith-Mapes play, as a visit to the Belasco Theater

will suggest, the idea is, in its essentials, given a foxy transcription.

In its details, the piece at the Belasco Theater differs considerably from the SMART SET story. For example, in the latter, the doctor's name was Gregory Sherrin (the name being chosen that the initials might imply the character was the author of "Man and Superman" practising the wooing science in-cognito). In the play, the doctor's name is Gerald Sumner.

For example, in the story the love prescription is bestowed by the physician upon the young woman; in the play, upon a young man.

For example, in the story the young woman doubts that the strategic physician can do anything to help her achieve the young man of her heart; in the play, the young man doubts that the strategic physician can do anything to help him achieve the young woman of his heart.

For example, in the story the doctor says to the woeful young patient, "Love isn't what you thought it was. It's a science;" in the play the doctor says to the woeful young patient, "Love isn't what you thought it was. It's a game."

For example, in the story the boom-erang fells the parent; in the play, the doctor.

For example,

But why continue? Do we not often read articles by managers and playwrights in the Sunday newspaper theatrical departments to the effect that it is thoroughly possible for several persons to have the same idea at the same time; that such "curious and inexplicable coincidences" frequently occur? And isn't the contention true? And, after all, is a year's difference in time in the matter of having the idea actually any real difference in time? Doesn't time fly and the year go by quickly? Certainly! All this gabble we hear about plagiarism is tommy-rot.

In order, therefore, to defend Messrs. Smith, Mapes and Belasco against any silly law-court nuisance which, after my demise, avaricious ladies purporting to be my widow may

seek to press upon them, let me point out that the idea of regarding love as a disease is (as they may find by reverting to page 10 of "D. S. W."—back numbers of THE SMART SET obtainable at fifty cents the copy) as old as the hills. On the page in question they will find that when the physician upon observing that "love is a science—a disease of the heart, like the other 'heart disease' people talk about," is rebuked for a smart-aleck, he makes rejoinder "Then Sir Almroth Wright, the celebrated British physician, who has called love 'the disease of abstinence,' Paul Bourget and Balzac, Dr. Lehmann and George Mehlis, von Hardtmann and Nolken, all of whom have treated love as a psycho-physiological problem in multicellular organisms rather than as a sentimental accident, Dr. A. Conan Doyle who has regarded love as a compound of chemicals, the ancient Greeks who realized the necessity of putting their young in training, so to speak, during the period of courtship, then these and many others were and are smart-alecks."

Surely here is sufficient proof to convince any jury that my pseudo-widows are mere self-seeking baggages. And surely here is the sufficient proof of the entire probity and authenticity of Mr. Belasco's excellent remarks in the *Green Book Magazine* for April, 1915, in the course of which that producer said that the notion that authors and managers cabbage ideas is all wrong and perfectly absurd. "There is," observed Mr. Belasco, "no reason for theft. No theatrical producer or playwright in his right senses will steal a plot or an idea. When a manager finds (sic) an exceptionally good plot which the author cannot handle (sic, sic), it is very easy to arrange to have the play gone over by an experienced collaborator (sic, sic, sic)." I agree with Mr. Belasco completely.

A further proof that will effectively put my pseudo-widows out of countenance may, very probably, be found in the back files of *Godey's Magazine*. Whether or not such proof is to be

found in the back files of *Godey's Magazine*, I cannot say positively; but in most plagiarism suits I have noticed that the back files of poor old *Godey's Magazine* are usually invoked with eminent success. Still another proof to confound the crêpe-wearing puellæ may be had from Mr. A. E. Thomas' play "What the Doctor Ordered," wherein is to be discovered a startlingly similar situation in which a medical man tells a married couple they will get along more amicably if they take a vacation, each from the other, every once in so often. Indeed, the proofs are numberless, despite Mr. Charles Darnton's allusion, in his critical appraisal of "The Boomerang," to the circumstance that "it (the play) makes a *short story* longer than it ought to be" and that "the idea of having a modern physician attempt to cure the oldest disease under the sun is clever *in itself*."

This plagiarism-klatsch is, as the producers and playwrights say, becoming an absurd affair. The howl of "stop thief!" is ridiculous, nincompoopish. Mr. Belasco alone has, in his long and exceptionally successful career, been accused of producing plagiarisms at least once every season. And Mr. Belasco rarely *produces* more than two plays a season. Things have got to the preposterous point where half the persons at a Belasco first-night are lawyers.

"The Boomerang" is a lively little farce, probably a ten times better one than I could have evolved out of the love-physician idea, had I tried. It even contains a couple of original situations conceived by Messrs. Smith and Mapes. And its enactment and staging are at once in thorough good taste and to thorough good effect.

* * *

I have once before recorded the fact that all war plays drop broadly into two groups: those in which a lady is, or is about to be, violated by an intoxicated gentleman wearing the enemy's uniform and those in which a wily spy braves immense perils for his flag and the leading lady. Roi Cooper Megrue's

war play, "Under Fire," drops with a thud into the second pocket. In this melodrama, which to the proportion of nine-tenths is of the genus tin-pot, we have all the conventional elements of the kind applause academy's curriculum. In rapid succession there pass by in review The Young Girl Who Has Been Lured Into A Mock Marriage By The Rascal, The Hero Who Coolly Faces The Villain's Pistol And Says Why Don't You Shoot, The Flip Young American Who Kicks Europe To A Standstill And With A Tear In His Eye Alludes Every Five Minutes To God's Country, The Final Rout Of The Enemy By The Sudden Arrival Of The Lucknow Relief Expedition With The Band Playing Tipperary, and so on. In addition, there are revealed many of the alumni of the Hiss School. For example, The English Butler Who Is Really In The Pay Of The Wilhelmstrasse, The Brutal Treatment Of The Kindly Old Innkeeper, etc.

The leading criticism to be directed against Mr. Megrue's melodrama, however, is that, being confessedly a dramatization of yesterday's newspaper, it is relatively as dramatic. Just how the author imagined that grains of interesting dramatic dialogue reposed in such belated information as "The Germans' advance in solid formation; they figure that it will take a sacrifice of just so many men to capture a trench," as "England was not as well prepared for the war as Germany," as "For years the Germans have been perfecting their military machine" and the like, is somewhat difficult of deciphering.

* * *

The gentlemen who pass upon the drama for our daily press frequently urge against this or that play that, before the first act is over, one can tell exactly how the piece is going to end. Just why, in the theater of Broadway, this should be regarded as a disadvantage, I am somewhat slow to comprehend. Certainly if the playgoer can, under such circumstances, leave the theater with two-thirds of the evening still left in which to enjoy himself, I

see no reason for complaint. The Broadway play the drift of whose plot is a bit mystifying is a nuisance. Instead of disappointing the theatergoer quickly and in workmanlike manner, it defers his disappointment until around eleven o'clock and so makes him waste a whole evening. The best thing, therefore, about Mr. Edgar Selwyn's piece, "Rolling Stones," is that, at nine o'clock, one can tell precisely what is going to happen at 9:30, 10:00, 10:15, 10:30, 10:31 and 11.

Thus, when at nine a couple of worthless sons are provoked into working for a living, one knows for an absolute certainty—from experience with such plays as "The Fortune Hunter," "It Pays to Advertise," "Broadway Jones," "Along Came Ruth," etc.,—that at 9:30 they will have got hold of a run-down business establishment of one sort or another; that at 10:00 they will have thought up a smashing new advertising scheme; that at 10:15 they will, by raising wages, have won the good will of all the old hands save the old-fashioned book-keeper who will view with misgiving the rash procedure of the young cubs; that at 10:30 they will have raised the revenue of the Nonpareil Ear Muff Co., or whatever it is, to something like three or four hundred thousand dollars a week; that at 10:31, just as everything appeared to be going so well, something will happen to make all seem lost; and that, nevertheless, at 11:00 everybody will be forgiven—except the author.

Frankly, though my confrères of the daily gazettes have hailed Mr. Selwyn's play as the usual masterpiece, I am able to see nothing in it. It reveals none of the humour of the same playwright's "Nearly Married," none of the character-pinning of his "Country Boy." It is of the theater theatricalissimo; it labours heavily with ancient materials. Mr. Selwyn can do better than this. Even aside from his belated theme, he has, in this instance, wrought ineptly. Consider, for example, the means whereby he brings success to his young candy merchants. Where Messrs.

Megrue and Hackett, in their advertising farce, exercised a sprightly and not unconvincing imagination in a similar thematic direction, Mr. Selwyn resorts to such alien stratagems as causing the Secretary of the Navy suddenly to order a million pounds of peanut brittle to take the place of alcoholic beverages on the American men-of-war and as causing the name of a brand of candy to be changed from "Spanish Kisses" to some other kind of kisses on the ground that everyone would know they didn't come from Spain. Imagine a bonbon-sucking navy. Or a person who believes that Spanish omelets come from Spain!

* * *

It is evidently also Mr. Augustin Mac-Hugh's belief that the way to write a successful new play is to rewrite some other fellow's successful old play. In "Search Me," therefore, this playwright has usurped "Grumpy"—as well as elements of "Stop Thief," "Seven Keys To Baldpate," "The Big Idea," etc. Our venerable grandfather, The Stolen Jewel That Turns Out To Have Been Paste, duly make his reappearance in this piece and totters 'round the stage in a gallant effort to pique the stalls. And our white-haired old grandmother, The Sudden Switching Out Of The Lights And The Robbery Of The Safe, is upon the old gentleman's arm. The romantic thief with his final speech assuring the audience that at heart he is a noble fellow, the eleventh-hour police, the impudent young American hero, the jest relating to the parting of the hair with the attendant query "Which one?", the vacuous young English johnny and other such comrades of our youth accompany their elders through the dialogic traffic. All in all, a tardy farce, vintage of 1908.

* * *

"Some Baby," a farce by Zellah Covington and Jules Simonson. Vintage of 1808.

* * *

"Mr. Myd's Mystery," a farce by Lillian T. Bradley. Vintage of 1708.

THE LITERATURE OF A MORAL REPUBLIC

By H. L. Mencken

IT remained for a pundit of German name, Polish nationality and Jewish race to write the clearest and most sagacious critical history of American literature that has ever charmed these old eyes—to wit, for Dr. phil. Leon Kellner (*Anglais*, waiter, bartender), professor of English philology in the Franz-Josef University of Czernowitz. Czernowitz is the capital of Bukowina, the Austrian jumping-off place: cross its border and you are in Russia. During the present lamentable war, which no one deplores more than I do, it has been tossed like a ball between Slav and Teuton, and the learned professor, I daresay, has had to do some lively jumping, for the Slavs are suspicious of Jews with German names and the Teutons take a bilious view of Poles who teach English. But whatever his troubles he can at least console himself with the knowledge that his "Geschichte der Nordamerikanischen Literatur" is a very penetrating and excellent little book, and that Miss Julia Franklin has put it into good English, and that Gustav Pollak has written a useful preface to it, and that the newspaper critics, estimating it by its bulk, will probably give it as much as ten lines of notice.

This Professor Kellner, remember, did his work at long distance, and, as it were, by wireless. He has never been in the United States; he doesn't know what it means to read the *New York Times Review of Books*; he has never heard (at least he doesn't mention it) of Harold Bell Wright, Henry Van Dyke, Richard Harding Davis and Gene Stratton Porter; he would probably mistake a best-seller, in its

gaudy slip-cover, for a box of cheap chocolates or a can of Russian tea. And yet, for all this lack of the usual training of critics, and for all the difficulties of writing about a literature (such as it is) in a different and hostile language, he has managed to put together a treatise that is truly remarkable for its clarity and coherence and for the independence and justness of its judgments. How easily he sweeps away the accumulated cant and academic fustian of years, and tells the truth in a few sentences! For example, in dealing with Emerson. With one stroke the gas is let out of the windy and muddled "philosopher"; with another stroke the "poet" is sent packing; the figure that emerges is the genuinely brilliant aphorist, the incomparable psychologist of "English Traits," the defiant egoist, the amazingly curious and interesting man. The bugaboo of schoolboys, the victim of college professors, the god of New Thinkers disappears; one discovers that, after all, this Emerson was a literary artist, and hence vastly more respectable than the brummagem Messiah his obfuscators have sought to make him.

So in other directions: Kellner shows that he has really given hard study to the men and women he writes about, and that he has studied them and thought about them to some purpose. You will search in vain for the rubber-stamp formulæ of the textbooks. When he deals with J. Fenimore Cooper, for example, he poll-parrots neither the ignorant adulation of the critics of the old school nor the equally ignorant iconoclasm of those

younger pedants who would deny Cooper all merit whatever. On the contrary, he shows both what is sound and praiseworthy in the man and what is shoddy and ridiculous—his alert pictorial sense, his love and understanding of nature and his faculty of meticulous observation on the one hand, and his lack of imagination, his defective feeling for character and his almost total absence of humor on the other. Whitman is treated in the same manner. Instead of taking up the cudgels either for or against him, submerging the words-drunk rhapsodist in the feeble prophet and platitudinarian, he devotes a few illuminating pages to Whitman's actual poetry, showing what is honest and worthy in it and what is merely pot-house ranting. His decision, on the whole, is one of skepticism. He admits the sensuous charm, the emotional appeal of some of those flamboyant dithyrambs, but he is not blind to their general poverty of content nor to their not infrequent descent to hollow jingling. Whitman's influence in America has been very slight; his only admitted followers to-day are jokes. Even in France and Germany his ripples subside. Max Dauthendey, in "Die geflügelte Erde," has gnawed his whitening bones, and such professional revolutionists as Johannes Schlaf and Paul Remer have credited him with æsthetic subtleties of which he was entirely innocent, and no doubt incapable; but in the main he has been forgotten. Swinburne, admiring him, nevertheless met and floored him.

For one thing, however, Whitman deserves to be remembered, and that is for the fact that he was the only American writer of his day who stood firmly against Puritanism and yielded not his neck to the pussy-foots of the pulpit and the academic grove. But even in this direction he accomplished very little, for as soon as he was gone the fog of Puritanism closed in again, and to-day it permeates all departments of our literature. Moral ideas completely engulf and obliterate æsthetic ideas. A novel or a poem is judged among us,

not by its dignity of conception, its artistic honesty, its perfection of workmanship, but almost wholly by its orthodoxy of content, its platitudinousness, its value for pointing a moral. A digest of the reviews of such a book as "Sister Carrie" or "The Titan" would make astounding reading for a Continental European. Not only our newspaper reviewers, but also most of our more serious critics, seem quite unable to estimate a piece of writing as a piece of writing; they are forever dragging in irrelevant gabble as to whether this or that character in it is respectable, or this or that situation edifying. Fully nine-tenths of the notices of "The Titan," without question the best American novel of its year, were devoted chiefly to denunciations of the morals of Frank Cowperwood, its principal personage. That the man was superbly imagined and magnificently depicted, that he stood out from the book in all the colors of life, that his creation was an artistic achievement of a very high order—these facts seem to have made no impression upon the reviewers whatever. They were Puritans writing for Puritans and all they could see in Cowperwood was an anti-Puritan. It will remain for Europeans to discover the true merit of "The Titan," as it remained for Europeans to discover the merit of "Sister Carrie."

This moral obsession is the thing that strikes Dr. Kellner most forcibly as he surveys the field of American letters. He sees the cold hand of Puritanism, not only in our grand literature, but also in our more ephemeral writing, in our minor poetry, even in our humor. The Puritan's unmatchable intolerance of opposition, his notion that his own narrow views are impeccable and unimprovable, his savage cruelty of attack, his delight in persecution—these things have profoundly hampered all free thinking in the United States, and particularly that form of it which delights in playing with ideas for the mere game's sake. On the other hand, the writer who would deal seriously with the great problems of life has

been restrained by laws which would have doomed a Balzac to a permanent residence in jail, and on the other hand the writer who would proceed against the reigning superstitions by mockery has been throttled by taboos even more stringent. For all our professed delight in and capacity for jocosity, we have produced but one genuine wit—i. e., Ambrose Bierce—and he remains almost unknown to-day. Our great humorists, including even Mark Twain, have not tilted at the stupidities of the Puritan majority, but at the evidences of lessening stupidity in the anti-Puritan minority. That is to say, they have always played the Philistine, which is but another name for the Puritan.

Mark Twain was a great artist, but his nationality hung around his neck like a millstone. So long as he confined himself to the sympathetic portrayal of American people and American scenes, laughing gently and caressing while he laughed—for example, in "Huckleberry Finn"—he produced work that will live long after the artificialities of the Boston Brahmins are forgotten. But the moment he came into conflict, as an American, with the ideas and ideals of other peoples, the moment he essayed to convert his humor into something sharp and destructive, that moment he became merely silly and the joke was on him. One plows through "The Innocents Abroad" and through parts of "A Tramp Abroad" with something akin to amazement. Is such coarse and ignorant clowning to be accepted as humor? Is it really the mark of a smart fellow to laugh at "Lohengrin"? Is Titian's chromo of Moses in the bullrushes really the best picture in Europe? Is there nothing in Catholicism save petty grafting, monastic scandals and the worship of the knuckles and shin-bones of dubious saints? May not one, disbelieving in it, still be profoundly moved by its dazzling history, the lingering monuments of its old power, the charm of its prodigal and melancholy beauty? In the presence of the unac-

customed, Mark Twain the artist was obliterated by Mark Twain the American: all he could see in it was strangeness, and all he could see in strangeness was hostility. There are chapters in "Huckleberry Finn" in which he stands side by side with Cervantes and Molière; there are chapters in "The Innocents Abroad" in which he is indistinguishable from Mutt and Jeff. Had he been born in France (the country of his chief abomination!) instead of in a Puritan village of the United States, he would have conquered the world. But try as he would, being what he was, he could not get rid of the Puritan smugness, the Puritan distrust of ideas, the Puritan incapacity for seeing beauty as a thing in itself, entirely distinct from and beyond all mere morality.

Most of our native critics, being Puritans themselves—consider, for example, the prim virgins, male and female, of the *Dial*, the *Nation*, the *New York Times*!—are quite anesthetic to the rank Puritan flavor of our national literature, such as it is. But to Dr. Kellner, with his Continental training, it is always distinctly perceptible, and so he is constantly referring to it, though he by no means denounces it. He senses it, not only in the harsh Calvinistic fables of Hawthorne and the pious gurglings of Longfellow, but also in the poetry of Bryant, the tea-party niceness of Howells, the "maiden-like reserve" of James Lane Allen, and even in the work of Joel Chandler Harris. What? A Southern Puritan! Well, why not? There is nothing but empty nonsense in the common superstition that Puritanism is exclusively a Northern, a New England, madness. Berkeley, the last of the Cavaliers, was kicked out of power in Virginia so long ago as 1650. Lord Baltimore, the Proprietor of Maryland, was brought to terms by the Puritans of the Severn in 1657. The Scotch Covenanters, the most poisonous of all Puritans, flourished in the Carolinas from the start, and in 1698, or thereabout, he was reinforced from New England. In 1757 a band of Puritans invaded what is

now Georgia—and Georgia has been a Puritan paradise ever since. Even while the early (and half-mythical) Cavaliers were still in control of these Southern plantations, they clung to the sea-coast. The population that moved down the chain of the Appalachians in the eighteenth century, and then swept over them into the Mississippi valley, was composed almost entirely of Puritans—chiefly of adventurers from New England, kirk-crazy Scotch, and that singular folk, the so-called Scotch-Irish. "In the South to-day," says John Fiske, "there is more Puritanism surviving than in New England." If you doubt it, turn to prohibition and the lynching-bee (the descendant of the old Puritan sport of witch-burning), or run your eye over any newspaper published South of the Potomac. In that whole region, an area three times as large as either France or Germany, there is not a single symphony orchestra, nor a single picture worth looking at, nor a single public building or monument of the first rank, nor a single factory devoted to the making of beautiful things, nor a single poet, novelist, historian, musician, painter or sculptor whose reputation extends beyond his own country. Between the Mason and Dixon line and the Gulf of Mexico there is but one opera-house, and that one was built by a Frenchman, and is now, I believe, closed. The only domestic art this huge and opulent empire knows is in the hands of Mexican greasers. Verily, Puritanism hath made a fine job of the South!

But Dr. Kellner's little volume, of course, is not a history of Puritanism; what concerns him is merely the literature of Puritanism, the literature of a people among whom the hatred of beauty takes on the virulence of a religious frenzy. Naturally enough, he finds it dismal and dour. There is nothing in it to awaken the enthusiasm of a civilized European; at its best it is always intensely timid and self-conscious; one finds nothing in it comparable to the gorgeous flowering of a Shakespeare, a Molière, a Goethe, a

Turgeneff. It has not even produced a Synge, a Thackeray, an Anatole France, a Björnson, a Strindberg, a Hauptmann. Its one undoubted artist, Edgar Allan Poe, spent half his life trying to prove to his countrymen that his art was not really an art at all—that it was merely a clever trick, and hence not unworthy of a God-fearing man. But for all this fear of beauty, Dr. Kellner still finds a lot in American literature to interest him, and he writes of it understandingly and sympathetically. His book, indeed, is extremely urbane: he tells the bitter truth, but he does not put it in the form of denunciation. He is full of hope, one believes, that a better day is coming, that the inherent falsity of Puritanism must one day bring about its collapse, that the artist among us must come into his own. I commend his "AMERICAN LITERATURE" (*Doubleday-Page*) to your kind notice.

Meanwhile, heralds of the new era are not lacking, though as yet they are few and far between. One of them is Willard Huntington Wright, an American in whom antagonistic sectional influences seem to have obliterated one another, for the man that remains is no more an American than James M'Neill Whistler, Henry James or James Huneker. Imagine it: he was born in Virginia, educated at Harvard, found himself on the Pacific Coast, and then passed on to Paris by way of New York! The result of these physical and psychical oscillations made itself visible a few years ago in an article published in *THE SMART SET*: a study of Puritanism in Los Angeles, so penetrating in its analysis and so ruthless in its truth-telling that the Tartuffes and Chadbands out there still vomit red-hot cinders every time they think of it, which is very often. There followed an excellent book on Nietzsche, the which I reviewed in these pages last March. But German philosophy and American hypocrisy were, after all, side lines; Wright's chief interest has always been in the fine arts, and he put in most of his time in Paris in study of the pictures there on show, and in con-

ference with the æsthetic prophets and revolutionaries of the left bank. The fruit of this pursuit is a volume called "MODERN PAINTING: ITS TENDENCY AND MEANING" (*Lane*), the first book in English to give a coherent and intelligible account of the new ideas that now rage in painting. He begins with Ferdinand Victor Eugène Delacroix, the leader of the romantic movement, and he brings the story down to the Impressionists, Cubists, Futurists, Synchromists and other such strange fowl of our own day. The task was big, but it has been accomplished with unfailing skill and enthusiasm. It would be difficult to imagine a better ordering of materials, a clearer manner of exposition or a more hospitable toleration of experiment and innovation.

The modern movement in painting, stripped of all extravagances and excrescences, is simply an effort to rid painting of its old subservience to decoration and story-telling, and to stand it on its feet as a pure art, like music. In music this emancipation has been almost completely achieved, and all persons who pretend to musical intelligence are agreed that such a composition as Beethoven's Eighth Symphony, which tells no story whatever but is simply a concord of sweet sounds, is a vastly more respectable work than such things as "The Monastery Bells," "The Battle of Prague," "The Mocking Bird" or, to go to the top, Beethoven's "Pastorale," all of which either presume to tell stories or are made up of more or less clumsy imitations of the sounds of nature—*e.g.*, the song of birds or the roar of thunder. True enough, what is called "program music"—that is, music which imitates or describes something outside and apart from itself—still has a certain vogue, and when it is written by a man of genius, as in the case of Tchaikowsky's "1812 Overture," or of parts of Richard Strauss' "Sinfonia Domestica," it even takes on an undoubted respectability; but nevertheless musicians are agreed that it is, at bottom, a false and meretricious form of music, and that the highest forms are

those in which the composer disdains to use such ingenuous devices as literal imitation and banal story-telling. All the beauty that music needs lies within itself. It is not helped, but rather hindered, when an effort is made to augment its effect by awakening a feeble and usually sentimental association of ideas. "The Old Mill" and "The Orphan's Prayer" belong to the convent schoolroom; in the concert-hall music-lovers want to be entertained by beauties that have been purged of such naïvetés—to wit, by the pure beauties of flowing and noble melodies, of novel and exquisite harmonies, of complex and yet inflexibly orderly polyphony, of rich and ingenious instrumentation, and of dynamic variety. There is no more meaning or purpose, in the conventional sense, in such a composition as Brahms' incomparable Fourth Symphony or Schumann's "Variations and Double Fugue Upon a Merry Theme" than in the patter of raindrops on a roof, and yet both of them are extremely beautiful and the emotions they evoke are elevated and intensely agreeable.

In painting, however, no such emancipation of pure beauty from mere subject matter has yet been effected, and until the second half of the nineteenth century it was scarcely even attempted. Pictures are still chiefly judged, not so much by the intrinsic beauty of the arrangement of lines, masses and colors which constitutes their material as by their success in awakening, by pictorial suggestion, sentiments and feelings which, at bottom, have nothing to do with beauty—for example, religious exaltation, sex excitement, pity, patriotism, the feeling of tranquillity, reverence, or the childish delight in the photographic, the surprisingly accurate. Thus, one hears in the galleries a good deal more talk about the "pathos" or "dramatic vigor" or "fine spirit" of a given picture, and about its mere fidelity to the object depicted, than about its actual value as a thing of beauty. In Millet's "The Man With the Hoe," for example, the average spectator al-

most forgets the picture itself in being sorry for the man. The emotions evoked are not æsthetic at all, but purely moral and sentimental. One does not think of Millet's management of lines and planes, lights and shadows, masses and colors, but of his model's sad eyes and sloping brow. Considered æsthetically, indeed, this picture is not beautiful but repellant, for it violates some of the first principles of all sound art, but inasmuch as it makes a powerful appeal to the heart no one notices its offenses to the eye, and so it is commonly regarded as a masterpiece. By the same process of reasoning "Yankee Doodle" is a greater song than Richard Strauss' "Cécilie."

It is Mr. Wright's business in his book to show how the more intelligent and inventive painters of the past century, and particularly of the past forty years, have sought to rid painting of this ancient bondage to moralizing and story-telling, this restriction of its function to mere illustration, and to lift it to that freedom as a pure art which music attained during the late Middle Ages, and which was made secure for all time by the colossal genius of Johann Sebastian Bach. Some of these revolutionaries have sought to reach a measure of this freedom without abandoning the illustrative function entirely—that is, they have sought to make the picture-dog wag the subject-tail. Of such are the Impressionists, who deliberately sacrifice fidelity in detail to the larger beauty. But others, more resolute and perhaps more clear-sighted, have argued that the only way to get rid of the old bondage is to sweep away subject entirely. It is the contention of these men that an arrangement of lines, masses and colors may be beautiful in itself, even though it may represent no intelligible object, and that experiment with such arrangements is facilitated by the abandonment of subject, just as experiment with harmonies and rhythms was facilitated by the abandonment of efforts to imitate such things as bird-calls and thunderclaps. They say that the art of paint-

ing, so long the mere hand-maiden of story-telling, is still in its infancy, that the laws governing the arrangements aforesaid are still but imperfectly known. Some of these laws, especially those relating to lines and masses, were discovered instinctively by the old masters, and all that remains is to work out their remoter implications. But others, such as those relating to colors, are still but imperfectly established, and here there is a large opportunity for experimentation, partly empirically and on the actual canvas, and partly scientifically, in the laboratory of optics. The old masters, for all their skill in other directions, really knew little about color. With them it was merely an afterthought, an aid to realism and a pleasing effect; they first made a drawing and then they colored it. But there is reason to believe that color is more than a decoration, that it may enter into the movement of mass and line, that a picture may be built up from color alone, and it is to the testing of this motion that some of the more daring rebels, for instance, the Synchronists, address themselves.

These pioneers do not ask us to believe that they are better painters than the old masters; they merely try to convince us that they have discovered optical and æsthetic principles of which the old masters were in ignorance. The task of applying these principles to the painting of great pictures remains for the masters of to-morrow; all that is being done to-day is to show what is possible, as Bach showed what was possible with the diatonic scale in "Das Wohltemperirte Clavier," a work often unbeautiful in itself, but the foundation of all beauty in music since. This much should be remembered in justice to the Cubists, the Futurists and other such fellows, whose bold vivisections have been derided as childish attempts to reduce painting to chaos. On the contrary, they are, in the main, honest efforts to get rid of chaos, and though they may strike the average spectator as ludicrous, for he finds in them none of the things that he looks for in pic-

tures, they are viewed with a good deal of respect by all painters who take their art seriously, and are eager to hear every theory that professes to make its principles clearer. Cézanne was laughed at in his time, as Turner was in his and Renoir in his, but all of these men, though they often erred, were yet so far right in their ideas that every first-rate painter of to-day shows something of their influence. In the same way many lesser men have left their tracks behind them, for although they may have been unable to paint great paintings themselves, they at least helped to show the way in which great paintings should be painted.

What I here rehearse briefly and very imperfectly, Mr. Wright sets forth at considerable length in his instructive book. It is not a primer for sucklings; the notions it deals with are often more than a little complex, and their comprehension presupposes a working knowledge of the æsthetic theories of the past; but to the business before him the author brings a sound knowledge of his subject and a marked capacity for clear exposition. There is no emotional missionarying; he does not hail this rebel as a heaven-sent prophet and the other as an impudent maniac; he tries to explain the discovery of each, be it real or false, from the standpoint of the discoverer, and to arrange the whole crop into something approaching an orderly sequence. His own god, one suspects, is Cézanne, but he gives no more importance to Cézanne than to several other men. A sound and useful volume. Its appearance lifts art criticism in the United States out of its old slough of platitude-monging and sentimentalizing.

What remains? An excellent light novel, the comedy of corpulence, by Frank R. Adams, an author well known and vastly esteemed by readers of these pages—by name, "Five Fridays" (*Small-Maynard*). A pleasing guide-book to good eating in San Francisco, particularly the San Francisco of sinful, happy, far-off days—by name "Bohemian San Francisco," by Clarence E.

Edwards (*Elder*). A new volume of Michael Artzibashef in English, "The Breaking Point" (*Huebsch*), of which more anon. A little book of "Fifty-One Tales," by Lord Dunsany (*Kernerley*), of which also more anon. Various dull examples of trade goods: "The Kiss of Apollo," by M. G. D. Bianchi (*Duffield*), with a heroine who shrinks from osculation; "The Indiscreet Letter," by Eleanor Hallowell Abbott (*Century*), an attempt at whimsicality; "The Nurse's Story," by Adèle Bleneau (*Bobbs-Merrill*), a tale of war and amour, with the orthodox officer and the inevitably pretty nurse; and "Penelope's Postscripts," by Kate Douglas Wiggin (*Houghton*), a mixture of love story and travel book.

Finally, there is "Boon," by H. G. Wells (*Doran*), a disorderly and somewhat incomprehensible rhodomontade against English smugness and hypocrisy. Just why Mr. Wells attempts the elephantine jocosity of passing it off as the posthumous work of a mythical George Boon, and hangs to it a preface by an equally mythical Reginald Bliss, is far from clear. The thing would have been easier reading without this excess baggage. The chief idea in it seems to be that the English literature of these latter times is chiefly a soughing of empty words, a combat of platitudes, a vast and sonorous hollowness. A sound idea, and one supported eloquently by many of Mr. Wells' own compositions, including especially this one. Here and there, true enough, one finds in it an apt and arresting phrase, a piece of genuine wit. For example, consider the picture of the United States that arises in the mind of an Englishman who reads the *New York Nation*: "a vain, garrulous and prosperous female of uncertain age, and still more uncertain temper, with unfounded pretensions to intellectuality and an ideal of refinement of the most negative description . . . the Aunt Errant of Christendom." But in the main it is tedious stuff—criticism inadequately thought out—the obvious in terms of the revolutionary.



In the Shops of the Smart Set

By Jeanne Judson

If you are interested in advance information, not only about the mode, but about things novel, dainty and useful, to be found in New York's

best shops, you will read the following pages with pleasure and profit. We will be glad to tell you where any of these articles can be found, or we will purchase them for you if you desire. Simply address your inquiry to The Smart Set Shop Department, and be sure to enclose stamped, addressed envelope for reply.



THE Busbee hat as shown by an upper Fifth Avenue shop and illustrated on the figure on page 158 is proof that the influence of things military is still being felt in fashions. The hat is of very dark green velvet, smocked over its entire surface, and made in exactly the shape of an English busbee. Instead of a plume, it has a huge fluff of dark green coque feathers, coming up the left side and nodding over the top in a big pompon. The price is twenty-five dollars.

STRIKING NEW
MILLINERY
MODES

Another very charming hat shown in the same shop and illustrated at the bottom of the



same page, is of black plush, the wide, stiff brim lined with velvet, with two fluffs of fancy ostrich, slanting out from one side of the crown.

Perhaps the rather sombre colors which are to be favored this fall are also an evidence of war-time influence. Subterranean green, field mouse brown, navy blue, plum, and blackberry will be most favored colors in suits, coats and gowns. The subterranean green and blackberry are new colors.

NEW TAILORED
BLOUSES

Blouses will be in the same or prettily contrasting colors to the suits. An exclusive waist house on

Forty-second Street, near Fifth Avenue,

is showing some really new tailored blouses. The pattern shown at the top of page 159 fastens with a single pearl button in the front. It is made of radium silk, in any color desired. It has a wide, low collar, which comes down to form reverses and fastens with the large button where it crosses at the front. The sleeves are long and cuffed.

Another equally attractive blouse is illustrated on page 160. It also has the wide, low collar, which in this pattern is finished with a big bow tie. The shoulders are shirred. The sleeves are long with turnback cuffs. This model, in any color of radium silk, costs only \$5.50.

Perhaps the most striking models to look at are those of cashmere silk, in what may be called shawl patterns. Shawl, because many of the designs look very much like the patterns of old-fashioned India or Persian shawls. Some of the patterns have the Japanese feeling. They are made with collars and cuffs of plain color. The collar is brought down to form reverses, and on the left side a bit of silk the same color as the collar and cuffs is sewed under a mock pocket to give the appearance of a tiny handkerchief. The same design is used in silk blouses with collar, cuffs and handkerchief of red, blue, rose, yellow or almost any color desired. These blouses sell for \$10.00 and \$12.00. The collar and cuffs are of soirée and they are washable.

Tailored in design and dark in color, but light and feminine in material, was another blouse of plum-colored crêpe de Chine, displayed

FOR THE SCHOOL-GIRL

The problem of outfitting the girl who is to go away to school is no longer a great one, as the shops are showing

wonderful values in smart, practical frocks for girls and young misses, especially designed for travel and school use.



The frock shown on page 160 may be worn by a miss of fourteen to eighteen years. It is of dark blue satin combined with fine black serge. The foundation is of the dark blue satin, as is also the wide sash tied loosely at one side. A finely tucked collar of white finishes the neck. The smock hangs from a yoke and fastens down the front with many small, black buttons.

The same buttons adorn the back of the sash, where it is fastened to the waist. The long sleeves are finished with half turned back cuffs. Around the bottom of the smock and the bottom of the skirt are wide bands of the black serge. The price of this dress is \$35.00.

A practical school dress for a younger girl is a three-piece suit. It consists of blouse, skirt and an Eton jacket. The blouse is of red and black plaid silk. The pleated skirt and the Eton are of dark blue serge. The waist has a wide collar of the plaid silk and a smaller, inside collar of white batiste. The jacket, which may be removed in the schoolroom, is fastened down to the skirt in front and back by four tabs, buttoned with small steel buttons. A silk tie attached to the jacket is adorned at each end with a round red ball. This coat dress is both very attractive and very practical. It comes in sizes for girls of from twelve to fifteen years, and costs \$16.50.

FOR MORE FRIVOLOUS AFFAIRS

Yellow taffeta forms the basis of a charming little dance frock for the girl who is going away to school. It is high-waisted with a deep shirred girdle. The yoke and puffed, short sleeves are of fine lace, and it is made with a modest, little vee-shaped neck. The bodice



is defined with rose ruching around the yoke, and rose ruching finishes the bottom of the full skirt. A touch of fairy lightness is given to the whole by a maline bow and streamers fastened to the left shoulder with a blue velvet flower, and floating from the back. This really pretty frock costs only \$35.00.

The suit illustrated on page 158 may be worn very effectively by a miss or a matron of slender proportions. It is of Scotch plaid wool cloth, green and brown being the predominating colors. The high collar and cuffs are of beaver. A piece of beaver also adorns the pockets on the side. The coat is a belted Norfolk style. The short skirt is gathered quite full in the back and is made with a wide paneled front. The price is \$85.00.

A more elaborate suit is of black, close-nap velveteen, trimmed with sable. The coat is square cut, like the old pony coat, but with an almost cape-like fullness. The skirt is made plain, with inserted gores at the sides to add fullness, without detracting from the straight lines, and giving the appearance of a broad panel in the front. There is a handsome collar of Japanese sable, made to fasten high about the throat in the new mode. The price is \$125.00.

A BUTTERFLY EVENING GOWN

Suggestive of an iridescent butterfly is the evening gown of yellow chiffon over pink satin, shown by one Fifth Avenue house. The underskirt of pink satin is finished with a wide flounce of the chiffon, edged with a silver fringe. The waist is made with a vest effect, iridescent pearl bangle cloth being draped over the shoulders and forming a wide band around the skirt. This is confined at the waist with a narrow girdle of blue and white satin. The gown is sleeveless with a round, low neck. The price is only \$62.50. This gown is illustrated at the top of page 157.



DOLLY VARDEN CHINTZES

Dolly Varden chintzes are the latest of the late summer fabrics for beach and country house frocks. They come in large checks and stripes of black and yellow or black and white. These are especially effective for beach coats and smocks. For the coats a glazed chintz is also used, which looks very much like awning cloth. These are be-

ing sold at a shop on Forty-second Street, near Fifth Avenue.

There is no indication that the coming of winter and high boots will have any depressing effect on the gaiety of milady's hose. Indeed, the fall showings are more frivolous than even those of summer. They seem a protest against the return of shoes to more conservative lines and colors.

MODEST SHOES AND GAY STOCKINGS

White silk hose with horizontal stripes of black, blue or brown on a drop-stitch ground give the same effect as a fine plaid. Sometimes an additional clock is embroidered up the side. These are being shown in an exclusive hosiery shop for \$3.00 and \$3.50 a pair. A pretty combination in these hose is bronze and white.

The latest in golf hose are Oxford gray or pepper and salt, made of pure wool and knitted in Scotland. They are \$4.50 a pair.

As for the shoes, while color "combinations" will be very little worn, plain colored kids in the darker shades will be much worn for the street. Especially will dark blue be popular.

Next will come various shades of gray—silver, pearl, battleship, neutral and steel gray to match suits. There is also a dark mahogany color which will be very much worn, a dark green and a deep purple which will go with the mulberry shade in suits. Most popular of all will be bronze kid, as this can be worn with almost any suit or frock as easily as black.

It is only in evening slippers that lady's footwear really becomes frivolous. Soft kid slippers will be made of every color to match gowns. The softness of the kid, the many colors in which it can be obtained and the ease with which it can be cleaned, all make it the ideal material for shoes for evening wear.

A FLASHLIGHT CANDLE

One of the most really useful novelties that has been brought out in a long time is the electric flashlight candlestick, which is on sale at a lower Fifth Avenue shop. The candlestick is of silver-plated white metal, with a tiny flashlight in the top. This is turned on by a switch at the base near the handle of the stick. Unlike most flashlights, it is not operated by a push button, and the light remains on until the switch is turned back.

The candlestick is $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches tall, with a $3\frac{1}{4}$ -inch base. It makes an ideal night light. The price is \$2.00.

Another admirable feature is that it is very easy to secure a new battery when the one in the candlestick is burned out.

GOOD LUCK FROM THE ORIENT

If you are at all superstitious you will want to possess one of the tiny bronze or brass Buddhas being shown by a Fifth Avenue shop. They come in three sizes—the smallest not more than three inches high, for only \$1.50;

the others, larger, at \$3.50 and \$8.50. For only \$1.50, too, you can get tiny bits of hand-carved ivory from China—wee elephants, Mandarin heads, flowers, or wee idols—each one perfectly carved.

A number of these bits of exquisitely carved ivory make an at-

tractive and unusual necklace, much more original for the woman who wants something different, than the ordinary round, carved, Chinese ivory beads; and then one has the added pleasure of buying each bead separately which adds interest.



FOR THE CHILDREN

This shop is also showing some new novelty toys. "Beauty" is a dear little woolly dog of white and tan with natural-looking brown eyes, a wee black nose and a coquettish blue bow. "Beauty" comes in three sizes at \$1.25, \$2.00 and \$3.00.

Another charming toy for children is the "wonder ball." It is a ball of pink or blue yarn, enclosed in an attractive box with the following enlightening verse:

Out of this ball,
If you will knit,
Will fall some toys,
From the Fairies' kit.

A spool is thoughtfully provided and the little tots are supposed to knit reins on the spool and as the yarn unwinds a tiny Japanese doll and a number of other toys drop out. Of course it depends on the child whether the yarn is knitted out or a more expeditious, though less industrious, method is pursued in obtaining them.

No matter where you live you can always avail yourself of the best that the New York shops have to offer, through the Shopping Service which THE SMART SET has established. Or if you live in the city you can save time by making use of this department which is designed for the convenience of all of our readers. We will purchase anything for sale in New York City upon receipt of its retail price, or if the cost is unknown to you, we will price the same and hold it for you until the requisite amount is received. Every article described in this department is guaranteed to be as represented. This service is at your disposal free of charge.

